

the Council of Industrial Design

January 1956 No 85 Price 2s 6d

Design



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PERIODICALS

*from the range
of lighting fittings
by FALKS*



Mira

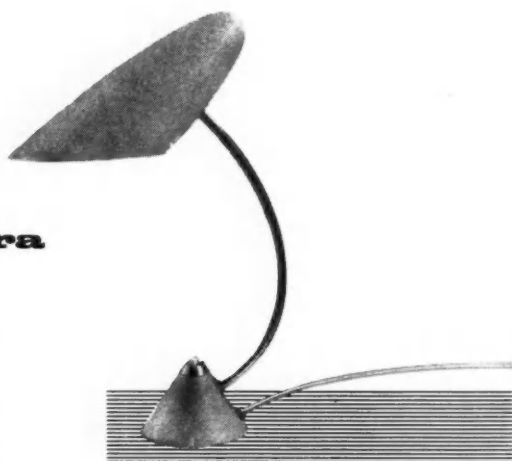


4

Vela ★★★★★★ *local lighting* ★★★★★★ **Oberon**
units



Ursa



Lighting Engineers and Manufacturers of
lighting fittings for all industrial, commercial
and decorative purposes.

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Designing for Automation

AT A RECENT CONFERENCE Sir Ben Lockspeiser, Secretary of the Department of Scientific Research, pointed out that "such high levels in precision and quality control can be reached in machine manufacture that trained imaginative minds can find far more new ways of creating beauty than already exist for perpetuating ugliness".

The prospect which automation offers is encouraging rather than otherwise. As a method of organising machines it is not as new as the word which has recently captured the popular imagination. The automatic telephone exchange and the manufacture of electric light bulbs pointed towards automation more than a generation ago. But the really significant development is the extent to which machines can now be given the purely supervisory job of minding machines and do it with much greater efficiency than human beings. By a punch card or magnetic tape system it will be possible for machines to absorb instructions and act upon them with astonishing rapidity.

Does all this lead only to a higher degree of mechanisation which will put production into an even tighter strait-jacket? There will be greater capital investment in expensive plant which must be used to full capacity in order to pay its way. This in turn indicates longer runs of standard lines that must be sold continuously to an expanding but stable market. Such conditions force manufacturers to plan their production well in advance, although the results of market research may well be out of date by the time the goods reach the consumer. To some extent the designer will be asked to exercise foresight and grope towards the future. He will certainly be expected to digest and apply an even greater number of facts and figures, and co-ordinate the requirements of technical and research departments. But a rigid system is liable to foster an attitude of playing safe, and tends towards mediocrity.

Yet it has been suggested that there may be another approach to automation which will encourage the development of machines that are themselves versatile and thus able to take advantage of the flexibility which the rapid and super-efficient control of machines by machines might bring. This would give the designer the opportunity to plan a wide variety of products, provided they were within the scope of the system, and to take into account possible changes in the requirements of markets. The appropriate designs could then be introduced quickly as the need arose and unsuccessful products withdrawn without disrupting production. There would also be a place in the 'box of tricks' for a few experimental designs which could test the reaction of the market to new ideas and act as pace setters.

It is early to try and grasp the full import of automation, but in any event it is as much a challenge to the foresight of its pioneers as it is to the skill and imagination of the designer.

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of lighting fittings
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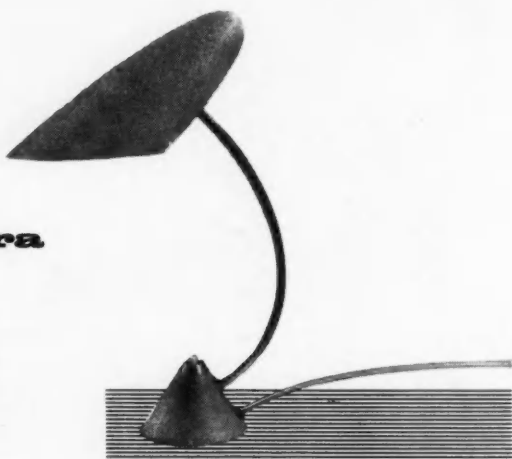


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Pointers

► Taste coming up

"We have to begin at the bottom by trying to improve the taste of the public as a whole and not pursue the other course of trying to force down the throat of the public something which is in advance of its taste." In this way Lord Chandos, chairman of Associated Electrical Industries, launched into his theme at the recent course on 'Art and Science in Industry' held at Ashridge House for the Design and Industries Association. "Much good will be done", he said, "if engineers, who are by no means the least artistic part of the population, are given courses in aesthetics and are shown that it is possible to design an aircraft or a turbo-alternator or even a transformer sub-station which will be a thing of beauty, a product of functional beauty." Lord Chandos added that there was nothing in what he had said which meant that the followers of aesthetic canons are likely to do any damage to production. This firm assurance from the top of one industrial tree should encourage those designer-engineers clinging to its lower branches.

► Grouping at the furniture show

A new venture at this month's 'British Furniture' exhibition promises to assist those who get foot weary looking for good designs. Under the title 'Group D', for design and display, Lionel Cinnamon, managing director of the Cintique Chair Co, has gathered 12 manufacturers together to form a joint stand. Only two in the group belong to the reproduction and 'traditional' schools; the remainder include some of our best known firms for modern design. As a challenge to other makers, if not to the exhibition itself, the group will be impressive on account of its own new products and its 20,000 sq ft stand designed by Ward and Austin. The '7th British Furniture Trade Exhibition' will be held at Earls Court from January 23-February 2.

► Better looking locomotives

The first large scale move towards railway modernisation has been made by the British Transport Commission. Contracts for 171 locomotives have been given to British firms to form the pilot scheme under which trials will be made. Anticipating the work to be done,

our issue for last September argued the need for a bold design policy, not only to increase the pleasure of travelling but to bolster the prestige of Britain's railways. Now there are signs that such a policy is on the way, for the commission, in conjunction with the manufacturers, is reported to be paying special attention to the external design of the locomotives. Expert advice is to be taken, presumably outside the commission, and it is to be hoped that this will not merely direct the design of sheet steel casings and painted trim, but help to improve radically the shape of the train itself.

► Art and commerce

At the opening of the recent exhibition 'Art in British Advertising', Mr Gavin Astor, speaking on behalf of the sponsors, The Times Publishing Co, said that £300 million a year is spent on advertising. But the exhibition, which was presented by the Advertising Creative Circle with examples chosen for aesthetic reasons, showed only a fraction of the results of this expenditure for last year. What might have been achieved for the public's pleasure was clearly indicated in the exhibits, most of which originated in the last 30 years. Something of the standard may be guessed from the fact that out of the total number of artists represented, 67 have had their work hung in the Tate Gallery, while only 16 were members of the Royal Academy. The standard set was not unreal, even though the majority of examples came within the sphere of prestige advertising. There never has been a justification for the artistically thoughtless or plain vulgar advertisements, however urgent it may be to hoist sales in a failing market.

► Designer's position defined

Without his name being mentioned the industrial designer's place in civilisation has been sensitively defined. Lord Adrian, speaking to the Imperial College, stressed "how much the technologist scores by the part he plays in human productiveness, because it involves art as well as science". The technologist, Lord Adrian said, achieves the "concrete expression, the fusion of theory and practice, science and art"; and he felt sure that the technologist who designs a bridge, or a car, or an aeroplane, may experience and communicate something of true aesthetic value. The industrial designer, as we understand the term, is also a technologist within Lord Adrian's meaning, for he stands mid-way between science and art in order to produce in his own work a synthesis of both.

It is widely known that the ancient British craft of watchmaking perished between the wars and has been recreated during the last ten years. Less often is it realised that the art of designing watches, which our craftsmen mastered two centuries ago, has had to be learnt anew in the process.



growing a **NEW INDUSTRY**

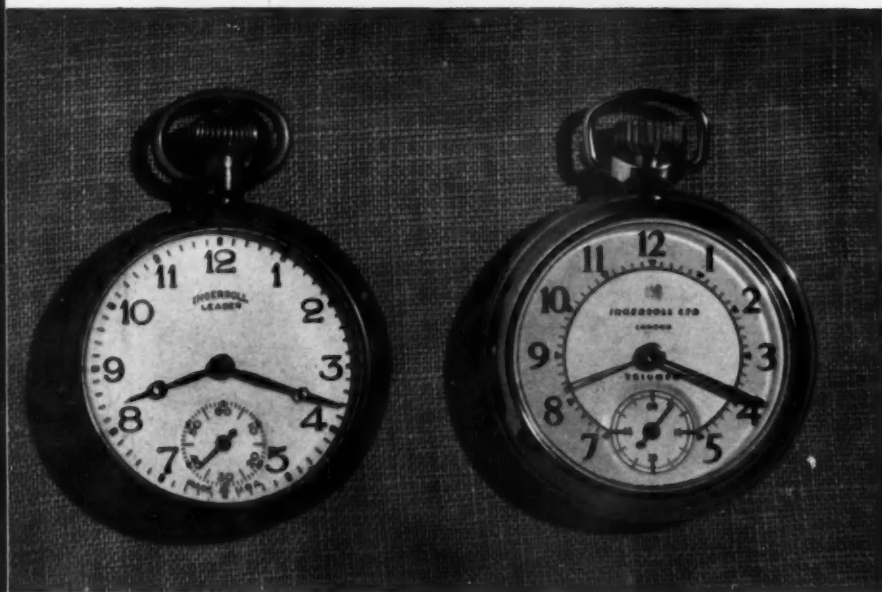
JOHN GRAY

Illustrations

In addition to Ingersoll Ltd and Smiths English Clocks Ltd, we are indebted to the following companies which allowed their products from abroad to be illustrated: Louis Braham Ltd, 'Avia' skeleton watch page 19; Watches of Switzerland Ltd, 'Cyma' woman's watch page 16 and Rolex 'Tudor Oyster Prince' page 18; A. F. Colver & Co Ltd (representing the Langendorf Watch Co), Lanco pocket watch page 15 and Lanco 'Flying Saucer' page 19; Marchand & Jobin Ltd, Majex 'Sunray dial' and Majex 'Black Zone' page 19.

MODERN BRITISH WATCHES owe their origin to the severe shortage of precision instrument makers that was experienced during the war. While still engaged in hostilities the Government approached the watch trade, then consisting mainly of importers, with a proposal to encourage the revival of domestic production. Modern factory space would be made available at reasonable rents. Public funds of up to £1 million could be spent on specialised machinery, which manufacturers could rent on generous terms and buy, if they wished, after five years. Protection, without which no infant watch industry could thrive in modern conditions, took the form of import quotas based on each firm's 1939 imports, together with a duty of 33½ per cent on imported watches. These restrictions incidentally halted the entry of foreign watches that were both cheap and of poor quality and so gave the nascent British industry an opportunity to replace them by better, though still low priced models.

Three firms responded to the Government's initiative. Louis



2

3



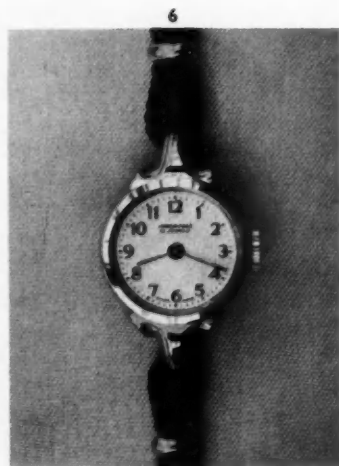
4

Newmark of Croydon concentrated on inexpensive wrist watches. Smiths and Ingersoll launched a new enterprise, the Anglo-Celtic Watch Co, which produced low-priced pocket watches at Ystradgynlais in South Wales. This company later began to manufacture men's wrist watches and recently it has included women's watches as well. Smiths, which had already gained experience of precision engineering, began independently to produce high grade jewelled-lever watches at its Cheltenham factory. About the same time, American backing was given to a fourth company, Timex, producing inexpensive wrist watches at Dundee.

At first the design of all visible features of British watches closely resembled the designs that were being currently imported. But in 1952 Ingersoll made a serious attempt to improve design standards with Eric Paton as chief contributor. It has confined its attention so far mainly to dials, where the scope for improvement is probably greatest. In this field Ingersoll has made considerable progress, though the hands, cases and straps remain virtually unchanged.

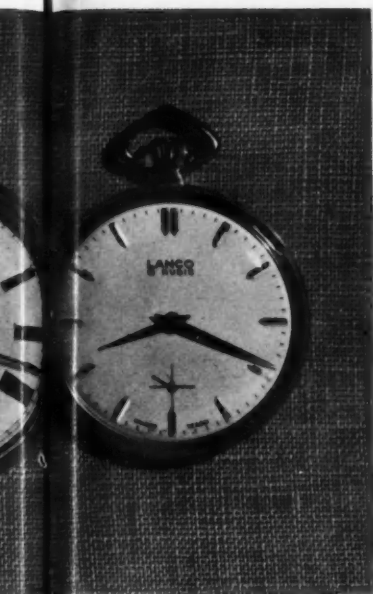
Modern dial decoration

In some of the new dials Ingersoll has broken away from traditional chapters, many of which were poor, and has replaced them by English typefaces, notably 'Gill Sans' and 'Perpetua', after modifying them slightly in order to suit a circular arrangement. Other innovations include a redesigned trademark, coloured dials and coined



6

6 This women's model, which illustrates the application of Ingersoll's policy to imported watches, has good figures in 'Perpetua' printed on a textured disc. The case pays timid respect to the popular belief, held by almost all manufacturers, that women's watches must be pieces of jewellery as well as timepieces. Its ornate strap-hooks mar the simple combination of dial, hands and rim. (In 10, opposite, the dial is shown by itself.)



5

2 and 3 Two Ingersoll pocket watches. 2, made in the U.S.A., is characteristic in design of the better low-priced watches imported between the wars: the figures are clumsy (especially the '2') and the hands are not much more inspired. 3 is a new, inexpensive, British made watch with figures based on 'Perpetua' and with dignified, though, perhaps, over-slender hands. The standard case is too big for the dial, however, and the new winder is a change of doubtful wisdom.

4 and 5 The elegance and refinement of the traditional pocket watch, 4, can be reproduced in the modern idiom, as in 5, by largely mechanised processes: and the cost need not be immoderate if movements of reasonable price are used. This slim dress watch from Switzerland has raised and pointed cyphers of polished metal, bold and confident hands and a tiny, unobtrusive dial for measuring fractions of a minute.

7



8

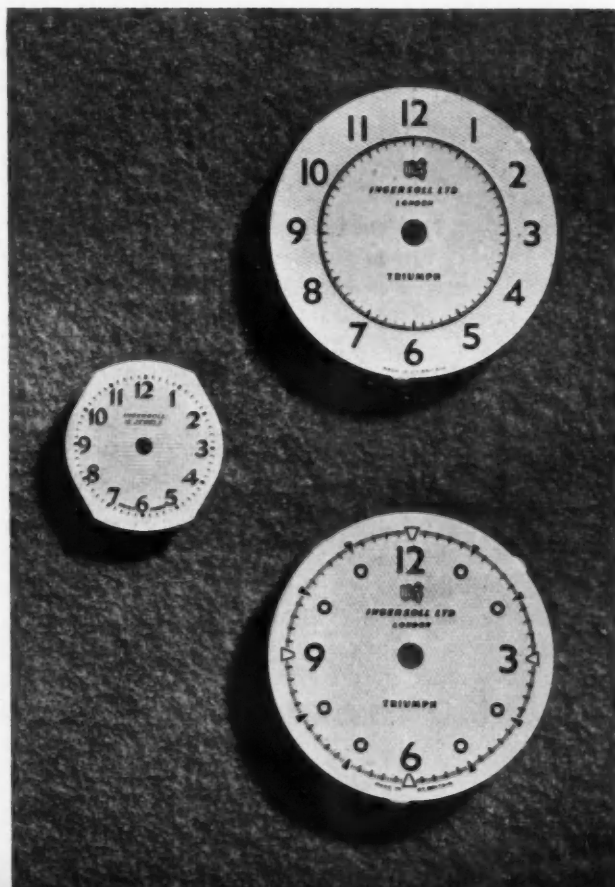


9



7, 8 and 9 Examples from the new Ingersoll range of low-priced wrist watches are grouped here with a comparable model, 7, dating from the period after the first World War. Sans-serif figures in 8, and 'Perpetua' italic figures in 9 are the main features of two clean and dignified dials. By comparison, the hands are somewhat crude, especially in 9. On the other hand the case of 9 harmonises better with its dial than does that of 8, or that of 1, on page 13. Yet all three cases are bevelled to camouflage their thickness and clumsiness. This comparison illustrates the difficulty of designing dials for highly standardised cases.

10 Three examples of Ingersoll dials, each textured with what are widely called guilloché markings. They are obtained by coining or etching all or part of the surface with one or more patterns. The technique is often used, but not always with success.



10

Growing a new industry

11 and 12 Among attempts to free women's watches from the conventions of fashion jewellery are the two interesting examples shown here. **11**, from 'Cyma', is an unambitious design which succeeds because of an unsophisticated harmony between all its components - including, for once, the bracelet. **12**, a British bangle watch, by Smiths, develops an ingenious idea simply and surely, though it is spoilt by poor hands and dial. The patterned metal shutters slide across the dial, when required, to form a continuous decorative feature on the plain metal bangle.



and etched surfaces. This development is not restricted to watches made in Britain. The firm has commissioned new dial designs for assembly in imported watches. It has also applied the change equally to wrist and pocket watches.

Apart from his connection with Ingersoll, Eric Paton has done occasional work for Smiths which now produces several dials of distinguished appearance, especially for its more expensive watches.

While all this is encouraging, it represents only the first stage of a design policy for mass produced watches. The final stage will not be reached until the same imagination is devoted to the design of cases and hands and to the assembly of all visible parts in a harmonious whole. Meanwhile unfavourable comparisons will inevitably be drawn between British mass made watches and the high quality watches imported from Switzerland. The latter are nowadays mainly of the jewelled-lever type: they embody fine materials and skilled craftsmanship of a quality that Britain has lost but is striving to recreate. A wide variety of hands and cases are used and the cases

13, 14 and 15 Three of Smiths' jewelled-lever watches. In **14** and **15**, the hands, dots and cyphers are combined in unusual formation and look equally well coloured black on white and gold on black (as in the centre model, which, unfortunately, does not photograph well). **13**, another original dial which does not altogether succeed, chiefly because its textured surface has an odd combination of patterns.

13

14

15



Growing a new industry

16 The Rolex 'Tudor Oyster Prince', one of the world's best known watches, is attractive and unpretentious in appearance.



16

generally have a slim appearance that is possible only with the use of small movements.

The case for smaller movements

In Britain Smiths' jewelled-lever watches alone are made in conditions like those of Switzerland. The best of Smiths' designs (even those with miniature movements) bear comparison with the best Swiss designs from a similar range of models. Most British watches, however, employ a movement with a non-jewelled lever because it lends itself more easily to mass production with labour that has to be trained from scratch. In general, these movements have been bulky and have had to be housed in somewhat crude cases which careful design can modify but not wholly camouflage. Yet bulkiness is not unavoidable: it results less from the nature of the movements than from the lack of the skill and machinery required to mass produce reliable small versions of them at a low price. As British watchmaking revives, smaller movements will become possible, though they may be more costly.

Some critics draw attention to a lack of originality in modern watches. But is this a fault? A well designed watch needs only clarity, grace and simplicity of outline and these should not be difficult qualities to obtain. The craftsmen of a century ago achieved them with ease and the only important design development since then has been the reproduction of these qualities on a smaller scale and in larger quantities. Innovation in watch design seems rarely to pay off. Dials that are square, rectangular or quartic mostly fail aesthetically. Novelty hands more often grate than satisfy. Cyphers, in place of numerals, please some and anger others, but they are incapable of much development as a design feature. Colour and texture have more possibilities, but they must be used with restraint or they detract from the clarity of a dial. In short, the design of a watch is more exactly determined by functional needs than most other consumer goods. Only fashion watches for women can break the rules with impunity.

Designs of watch hands

The manufacture of hands can still involve a high degree of skill but this need not deter designers from trying to vary and improve appearance. A and B show two not very distinguished designs in common and repeated use today. C and D are two good, current Swiss designs. E and F suggest hands that could be made in Britain with present skills and without excessive difficulty. The right-hand design in each pair is intended for luminous hands.



A

B

17, 18, 19 and 20 Swiss experience suggests that experiments in watch design do not always yield good results. 17, a Lanco watch, makes use of a large dial, flat in the centre and bevelled at the sides to give a deceptively slim appearance. 18, from 'Avia' is equally ingenious: the case, within a metal rim, is of transparent plastic which reveals the movement of the watch when viewed from the back and throws the black figures and cyphers into prominence when seen from the front. The textured and bi-coloured centre of the dial is also interesting. But the technical novelty of the watch limits its aesthetic achievement. This criticism is also true of the Majex, 19, in which raised and bent metal cyphers are mounted on a narrow rim encircling the black dial. 20, made by the same firm, uses a subtle form of texturing and is satisfactory in all but its figures.



17

18



19

20



C



D



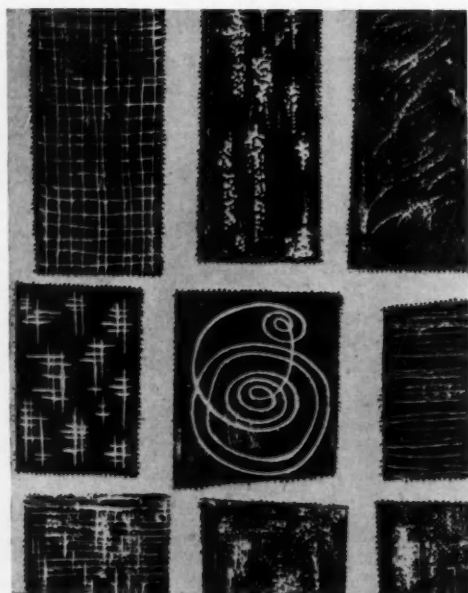
E



F

*A review of two new collections from
John Line & Sons Ltd including a
special set of designs by John Farleigh*

hand produced **WALLPAPERS**



This detail of a design entitled 'Dominoes', from Line's normal hand produced range, appears almost to be a demonstration of the qualities that can be achieved by the photo silk screen process. As such it expresses the current feeling for texture in interior design. The next stage is to allow such qualities to form an organic part of more representational patterns.

IN THE LAST issue of DESIGN (pages 18-23) we discussed some of the problems which are particularly relevant today in the design and manufacture of wallpapers, in an attempt to find a basis for a critical assessment of two new pattern books. Now, a collection of patterns from another firm, John Line & Sons Ltd, will soon be available and can be discussed from a similar standpoint.

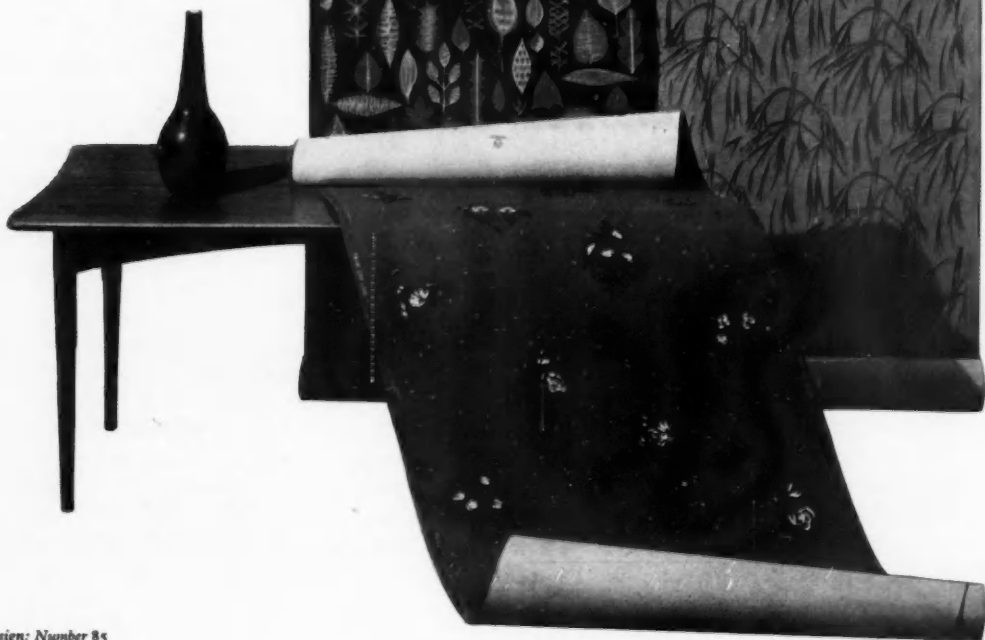
Although Line's markets a wide variety of designs, the firm's actual production is largely concerned with hand printing methods, today carried out partly by silk screen process and partly by block printing. The well equipped factory existing as the core of a large merchant house provides the foundations of a policy ideally suited to the introduction of at least a proportion of designs of an advanced and experimental nature. Indeed Line's was producing bold modern patterns in hand printed ranges long before similar designs could be obtained in machine printed collections.

The latest patterns fall into two distinct groups. One of these is a special set, consisting of 11 screen printed designs by John Farleigh, who was introduced to the firm through the CoID's Record of Designers. The production of a pattern book wholly devoted to designs by one artist is unique in the industry, and it will be interesting later to learn the success or otherwise of this bold experiment. The treatment of many of the designs is characteristic of the artist's work. Farleigh is probably best known for his wood engravings, and the flowing calligraphy of the drawing in these papers, often conceived within a traditional framework, reflects a hand conditioned by the engraver's tool. The result is a style which, if lacking in some of the brittle tension of the most advanced modern design, is executed with a freedom which sets it apart from much traditional work. It is, however, in the designs which escape from the calligraphic formula that the most successful results have been achieved. Two examples of these are illustrated on the opposite page.

The second group of papers forms part of Line's normal hand produced range. Three of the latest examples, shown here, are outstanding in their bold use of tone and colour and reflect the current movement towards rich effects in interior design. They will be included in an entirely new collection, now being prepared by the firm, which will be available later in the year.

'Ceres', below right, and
'Arbour', on the table,
are from the Farleigh set.
'Arbour' makes the greatest
use of the silk screen
process, the dashing drawing
requiring accurate repro-
duction to convey the spirit
of the design. 'Ceres' is
a loose design held together
by a subtle and barely
perceptible diamond structure.

The other designs - 'Gretel',
left, by E. Calvetti, and
'Antigua', top right - are from
the firm's hand produced
range. They are rich and 'full-
blooded'; 'Gretel' particularly
providing the type of stimulus
to the industry which is needed.



Operational design

The needs of the user as a basis for the design of control equipment

THE ADVOCATES of better appearance can make their chief contribution to the design of industrial equipment at those points where men and machines come into contact. Every type of control equipment exists only to be seen and to be handled and depends, for its efficient working, on the reactions of a human operator. It is for this reason that those who claim special knowledge of human and aesthetic reactions to shapes and forms can make a real contribution.

The greatest progress in this field has been made by scientists working experimentally. The new science of ergonomics, which co-ordinates the work of anatomists, physiologists, psychologists, colour consultants and methods engineers, has emerged to meet the need for precise and comprehensive knowledge of man-machine relations. There is now an opportunity for industrial designers to take up this work where the scientists leave off.

It has been suggested* that industrial designers should consciously adopt the ergonomic approach and try to relate the design changes they make to the real needs of the user. The present lack of interest in the functional approach to design that arose in the 'thirties can probably be explained by the inadequacy of the functional doctrines then prevailing. Structural functionalism and economy of manufacture remain essential to any good design for industry, but the bleak and barren results of allowing these considerations to dominate is a sign that the early functionalist recipes left out some important ingredients. The growth of ergonomics is in this sense a recognition that the real needs of users of equipment are the chief considerations in design. A new functionalism based on human as well as material considerations is now arising. If these newer and wider concepts of functional design can attract and stimulate designers, as did the cruder functionalism of the Bauhaus, we may see a notable change in the aims and objects of industrial design. Such an eventuality would do much to remove the prevailing impression that industrial designers have no useful contribution to make apart from stimulating sales without real advantage to the user.

In the industrial field there are many kinds of control situation but the ergonomic standard is seldom as high as it could be. Many power station control rooms are of a high ergonomic standard but preliminary research is beginning to show that even these may be unsuited to the work that is carried out. Observations of control room activity suggest that the facilities provided for the engineers may differ from their actual requirements. Similar conclusions may be drawn from studies carried out in steelworks, crane cabs, railway signal boxes, locomotive cabs and the new control devices required in semi-automatic production.

It is often found that the proper integration of human factors is very time-consuming because they are complex and interacting. At the present state of knowledge the application takes a long time and some basic research has usually to be carried out. This can best be done in an experimental design that is produced in anticipation of future needs, a method that has the advantage of providing apparatus which can be demonstrated to those who pay for control equipment but may not have experience of working with it themselves.

The tendency in some branches of British industry to distrust design research in general, and experimental design in particular, stands in the way of this kind of development. But once such projects have been carried out, as they must eventually be, there will grow a body of designers who have sufficient experience and knowledge to arrive at speedy yet humanly correct designs in the rush of normal industrial development. Until such a time, and in order to hasten its coming, there is a need for determined efforts to introduce new standards in the design of operator-controlled devices of every kind. Difficult and slow as is progress in this field it is infinitely to be preferred to the introduction of change for its own sake, for styling and for slickness, which are now so readily carried out.

Genuine and painstaking ergonomic research and its sympathetic application in design can only result in real and worthwhile improvements which will eventually benefit the users. Such advances will continue to provide the best field of work for many of our industrial designers and artist-engineers. J. CHRISTOPHER JONES

* DESIGN June 1954 pages 13-17, December 1954 pages 34-38.

The 'Hurdapta' and the 'Parkray No 3' show current attempts to resolve the problems of thermal efficiency and smokeless burning while maintaining an attractive open fire. The 'Hurdapta', a free-standing convector fire with flanged body and façade front, now adds a concealing wrapper and moves closer to the stove type. The 'Parkray No 3' has moved away from its more stove-like original to become a self-contained inset convector fire, with a close fitting but free-standing façade. The up-draught 'Hurdapta' provides an actual fire which is closer to the traditional open fire, yet the down-draught 'Parkray No 3' holds closer to the traditional setting. Is there an answer to the problem?



'Parkray No 3'



'Hurdapta'

Clean air and compromise

Urgent development needed for more efficient open fires in the home

F. C. ASHFORD

THOSE CYNICS who see the Clean Air Bill as a great big stick to stir up the mess which is fuel utilisation and industrial and domestic heating in this country, may not be far wrong. But however it strikes us, either as too mild or framed in the interests of industry, it has already resulted in a great stir – at least of mental activity – in the field of domestic heating. One senses an awakening of interest; a feeling that the picture of the old cast-iron fire in its formal tiled surround is being taken out, dusted off and subjected to a fresh, livelier and more critical examination.

For the design of the open fire constitutes a challenge which we have yet to meet – on its own terms. The advent of the Bill, with its stringent requirements for burning coke or consuming smoke, adds piquancy to an already interesting problem.

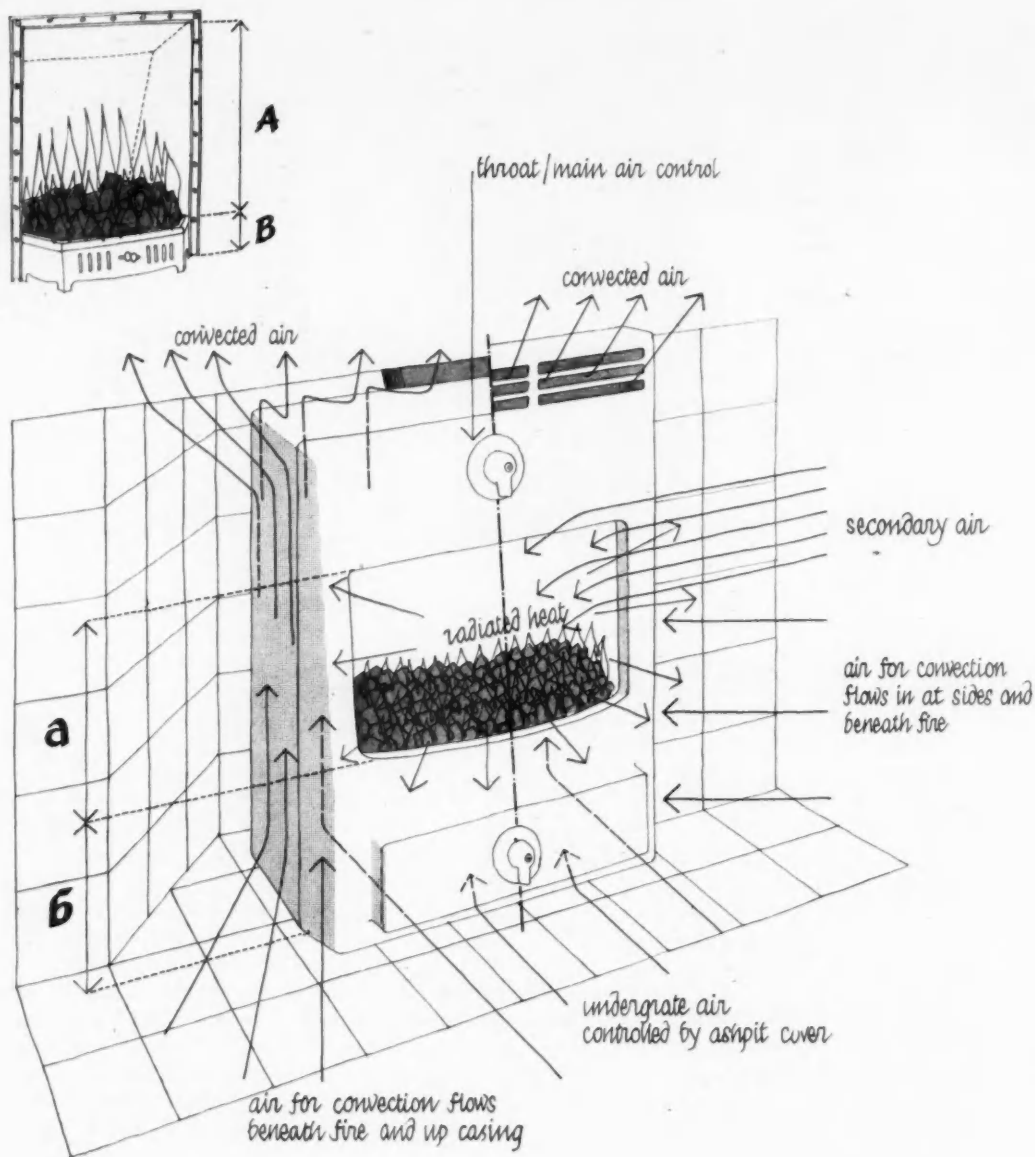
Almost overnight, in terms of normal conversion, some hundreds of thousands of householders are to be switched from the most inefficient yet the most dearly

loved type of appliance, to ones of greater efficiency but unfamiliar appearance and which may demand considerable mental adjustment and change of habits.

The sad fact is that the requirements for burning coke or securing the combustion of the volatiles of bituminous coal – both essential for compliance with the Bill – tend to produce a dull and uninteresting fire, which is characteristic of the stove. And we are not, as a nation, addicted to the stove or any unseen source of heat, however efficient it might be.

As efficiency has increased, so our view of the fire has decreased; the top of the picture frame lowered, the bottom raised and the sides brought in. Slowing the flow-rate of secondary air by throat restriction or taking it down behind the fire in the interests of smoke consumption has robbed us of the leaping flames and the bright top of the fire. Aesthetically, we are now viewing the back of the picture.

DESIGN for January 1955 has already stated the case



Points for and against the free-standing fire

A composite design is compared here with a conventional coal burning stool grate shown on a smaller scale.

Debit

The view of the fire has been reduced to about half (A-a) because of the smaller opening in the free-standing fire. This and the necessity of burning coke have reduced the aesthetic value of the light, colour and movement of the flames. The height of the front has increased almost twice (B-b) and we have lost the valuable low level radiation of the open fire.

Credit

We have gained by convection, heat which originally went up the chimney or into the fabric of the building. We have considerably reduced draughts and fuel consumption by restricting the flow of air through the throat. Though we have a smaller source of direct radiation, this is more than balanced by the gain in convected heat and the reduction of the amount of air-replacement in the room.

for the free-standing open fire, and I shall not attempt to add much to Mr Beresford Evans's exposition of our deep-seated attachment to the traditional open fire, except to emphasise how foolish it would be to try to ignore this very human factor.

In addition to any sensuous satisfaction, we find that the open fire is a constant source of light, colour and movement; a perfect background to contemplation, conversation and many other activities of the home. Some foresaw its replacement by the television screen as the focal centre of home activity. But this has so far shown itself to be a poor substitute; the open fire may lull you to sleep, but it never bores.

Fuel efficiency in the convector fire

The list of recommended appliances* covers those with efficiencies ranging from 25 to 75 per cent, suitable for continuous and/or intermittent burning. Since gas coke, which is what most appliances will have to burn, † is essentially a fuel for intermittent rather than continuous burning (except for closed appliances with adequate firebox sizes) it seems likely that the comfort and convenience of overnight burning to which so many householders have been recently introduced will be denied them.

There is too some doubt whether the average householder will take kindly to gas coke, although acceptance will depend to some extent upon the correct size grading for the particular type of appliance used. Personal experience suggests that a rather high rate of burning is required to maintain a bright fire which compares at all favourably with a coal fire with its greater visual interest.

In addition to the appliance being able to burn coke, it will assist what is obviously going to be a difficult fuel situation if it can burn bituminous coal with a marked reduction of smoke emission - until such time as smokeless fuels are universally obtainable.

Further, appliances which can be installed, or removed, with the minimum of structural alteration will obviously fit in better with both the long and short term aspects of the Bill. We must not overlook the possibility of really cheap electricity from nuclear power, however remote the development of it may appear at the moment.

Yet there lurks here a danger. Local authorities endeavouring to secure the highest rate of conversion, may be tempted to approve the cheapest or the most easily installed appliances, irrespective of their

efficiency, thus wasting precious smokeless fuels.

The trend of design which appears best to fit into the picture - not overlooking costs - is that of the convector fire, well illustrated in current production by Hursel's 'Hurdapta' and Radiation's 'Parkray No 3' fires. A synthesis on page 24 of the general features of these illustrates the points made so far; it also shows how we have surrendered a great deal of the aesthetic value of the open fire.

The 'Hurdapta' is a highly efficient fire; it will burn smokeless fuels and bituminous coal with less emission of smoke than the conventional open fire. It can be fitted easily into many existing fire openings, or a special tiled recess, calling for the minimum of work in installing or removing.

The 'Parkray No 3' works on the down-draught principle, having a façade with adjustable louvred top adapting it to a variety of existing openings. In addition to burning smokeless fuels it burns bituminous coal with a considerable reduction in smoke emission. It is self-contained and uses the fireplace as a convection chamber but requires, perhaps, rather more work in installation or removal. Each appliance probably represents the limit of development along its own particular line.

Where do we go from here? Is the problem insoluble? Must we abandon the aesthetic ideal; or have we made our approach on too narrow a front?

The domestic solid fuel appliance has long been a perquisite of the ironfounders, and until quite recently their chief preoccupation, with a few notable exceptions, appeared to lie with the marketing of the maximum tonnage of cast iron. Appliance efficiency has only recently become the watchword, and the spur to it has come largely from outside the industry.

Producing the integrated fireplace

We should not hesitate to abandon traditional materials or methods of manufacture where any new approach holds promise. Sheet steel has so far foundered on the rock of finishing, but advances are continually being made in the field of high temperature finishes and high performance alloys. We may not have fully appreciated the opportunities which ceramics afford, for we can already see how the surround is being considered as part of the aesthetic whole (DESIGN December 1955), and we already use the casing or the façade of the fire for convection purposes. There seems to be no good reason why we should not consider the fire and its surround as a single aesthetic, functional and manufacturing problem, handled either by existing manufacturers or by a new, clearly defined appliance industry.

* Coal Utilisation Council. Prepared in consultation with the Ministry of Fuel and Power.

† Report of Committee on Air Pollution. Command 9322. HMSO 1954, price 2s 6d.

Details of a competition for the design of settings for free-standing domestic fires are on page 49.

1 Dining room before redesign. Dark brown paintwork and imitation leather paper. Floor covering in brown linoleum and coconut matting. Trestle tables and worn utility furniture.

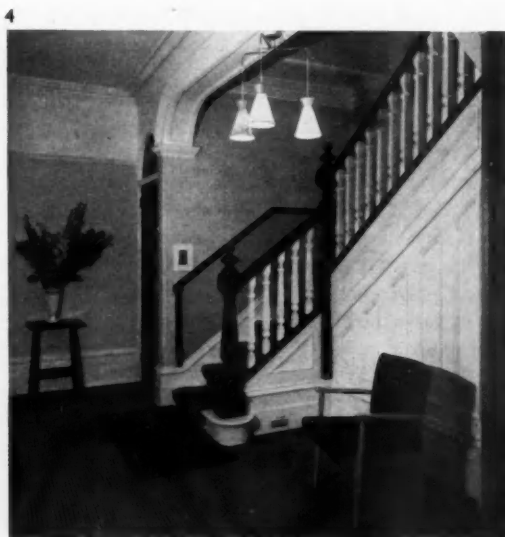
2 After redesign. Cork tiled floor. Tables by Conran Furniture with grey Linette 'Formica' tops and black metal legs. Chairs by Goodearl Bros Ltd with yellow 'Lionide' covers. Light fittings by Oswald Hollmann Ltd, General Electric Co Ltd and Merchant Adventurers Ltd. Doors and walls grey but door frames and remainder of paintwork and ceilings white. The original heavy fireplace on right was removed to give more space and replaced by simple tiled recess with 'Esse' stove.

3 The staircase hall before redesign. Imitation leather paper on wall. Lincrusta papered dado painted dark green matching other paintwork. Spherical light fitting hangs from dark cream ceiling. Multicoloured 'Turkey' carpet.

4 After redesign. Existing polished mahogany balustrade remains but is contrasted with white paintwork. Yellow and white Scandinavian wallpaper from Primavera on stairs. Walls and dado grey. Brass chandelier by Oswald Hollmann Ltd. Carpet in slate blue by Heckmondwyke Carpet Co Ltd. Chair by Parker-Knoll Ltd with cherry red cover.



Adult college transformed





2

THE ILLUSTRATIONS ON THESE PAGES show some of the changes which have been made recently to the interiors of the Wedgwood Memorial College at Barlaston. During the past two and a half years the CoID has held at the college five courses for retailers on pottery design and one on glass. During one of these courses it was learnt that the college was to be decorated and refurnished. This seemed a perfect opportunity to demonstrate the value of employing a designer to plan the schemes, and when the Council suggested that it might recommend a designer from its Record, the idea was enthusiastically received by the college authorities.

The building itself is a Victorian structure typical of many country houses of the period built on the edge of manufacturing towns. Although run entirely by the North Staffordshire Committee for Adult Education (consisting of representatives of the local education authorities of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, of Oxford extra-mural delegacy, North Staffordshire University College and the WEA), the College was once housed in Barlaston Hall, a house owned by Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd, from whom it derived its name. The designer chosen to plan the scheme was Jo Patrick, who was also responsible for designing the British showflat at Hälsingborg (DESIGN June 1955 pages 9-13, and August 1955 pages 9-15) and several other Council projects.

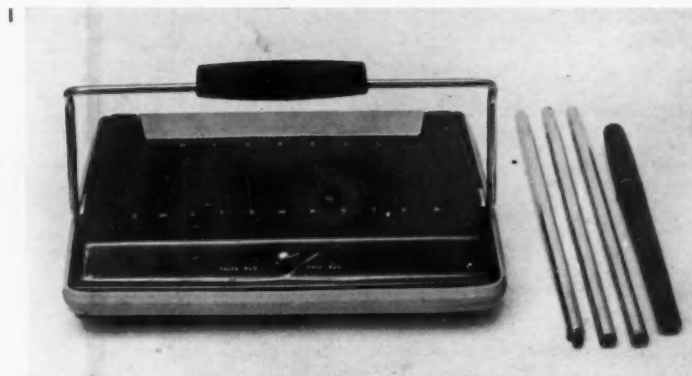
In planning the interiors Mrs Patrick was fortunate in having the ready co-operation of the chief education officer and the city architect for Stoke-on-Trent. The budget available was necessarily restricted and precluded major structural alterations. However, the designer was able to divide some of the bedrooms to accommodate two instead of four beds, thus breaking away from the dormitory atmosphere. At the same time, by disposing of the existing furniture, and by installing new modern pieces, by creating simple, bright colour schemes to replace the dark paint and distemper that covered most surfaces, and by introducing a few dominant features, such as the boldly patterned curtains in the dining room, Mrs Patrick has given the interiors a new breadth and spaciousness that is clearly apparent in the photographs.

Courses on widely differing subjects are held at the College throughout the year, and the new interiors will be seen by all types of people including teachers, miners, housewives and school children. For many it will be a rare opportunity to spend several days in modern surroundings. The scheme has a particular advantage for the CoID because from now on its pottery and other courses can be held in an atmosphere in which good design prevails - a situation which can possibly do more than words to win the support of the retailers and buyers who attend.

The items shown have recently been accepted for inclusion in 'Design Review', the illustrated record of current British products, to be seen at the headquarters of the Council of Industrial Design, 28 Haymarket, London SW1. Retail prices quoted are approximate and include purchase tax where applicable.

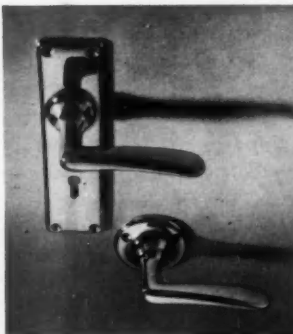
Review of current design

1 The smart and efficient appearance of this carpet sweeper, the work of an American designer, reflects the vitality and thoroughness which is characteristic of much product design from the U.S.A. The exaggerated letterspacing of the name plate, however, is an irritating cliché. A centre wheel allows the brush to be the full width of the sweeper so that it can clean close to a wall. The casing is a mild steel pressing finished in copper, grey, blue or green, with a plastic buffer strip. DESIGNER Harley Earl Corp. MAKER Halex Division of the British Xylonite Co Ltd. Price £4 6s 6d.



2 First produced before the war these lever door handles reveal a clear appreciation of the human requirements in such equipment which have since been summed up by the word 'ergonomics'. The arm of the lever is flattened where the downward pressure is greatest and there are no sharp edges to cause discomfort for the hand. They are made of pressure die cast zinc finished in coinage bronze or chromium plate. MAKER Evered & Co Ltd. Price left 18s 6d (bronze), £1 (chromium), right 13s 9d (bronze), 15s 3d (chromium).

2, 3

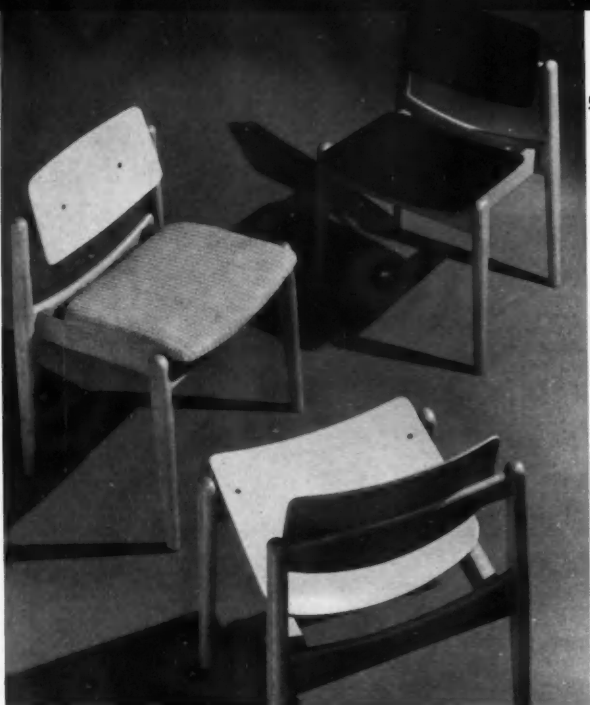


3 The soap dish is one of a range of metal bathroom fittings which depend for their appearance of good quality on the careful attention which has been paid to detail design. An example of this is the use of a backplate with lugs so that no fixing screws are visible. The finish is chromium plate and there is a detachable plastic tray. DESIGNER Scott-Ashford Associates Ltd. MAKER W. C. Youngman Ltd. Price 10s 2d.

4 Several different ways of introducing decoration to modern furniture have been tried in recent years with varying success. In this sideboard the sliding door fronts have a small geometric pattern in pressed plywood and it is, perhaps, one of the most satisfying of recent examples. The carcass is of solid beech with a mahogany veneer. DESIGNER Robert Heritage. MAKER G. W. Evans Ltd. Price £23 16s 10d.

4





5

5 These stacking chairs are more conventional and less elegant than their well known predecessor from the same firm – the 'Jason' plywood chair. They have, nevertheless, a simplicity of proportion and a sturdiness which make them a welcome addition. The framework is of beech and the plywood seat and back are veneered in various woods, or are enamelled in a choice of colours. DESIGNER Frank Guille. MAKER Kandya Ltd. Price from £2 15s.



6

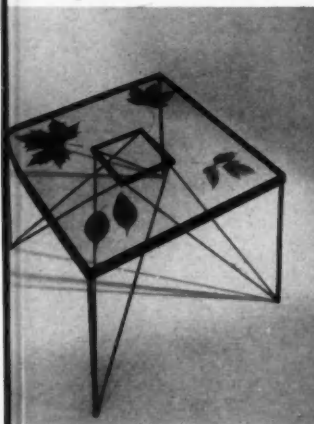
6 The handles of these 'Phoenix' casseroles are an innovation in glass ovenware. They are claimed to cool so rapidly that no cloth is necessary when they are used on the table. DESIGNER Arthur Brown. MAKER The British Heat Resisting Glass Co Ltd. Price 10s 2d each.

7 'Chameleon' is an appropriate name for this table in which the decoration of the top can be changed to suit the room. Pressed leaves or any suitable material can be sandwiched between two sheets of glass which are contained within a black angle iron framework. DESIGNER Michael G. Wolff. MAKER S.W. Display (Hanging Gardens) Ltd. Price £10 0s 4d.

8 The charm of this bone china tea service lies in the subtle shapes which express all the delicate qualities of the material. The formalised oak leaf pattern is in gold. DESIGNER Hazel Thumpston. MAKER E. Brain & Co Ltd. Price Cup and saucer £1 5s 6d Plate £1 12s 6d.

9 For the private study or for the immaculate business office this hazel pigskin desk set has a restraint which reflects the fine quality of British leather goods. The items can be obtained singly or in sets and are available in other leathers and colours. DESIGNER E. Dudley Smith. MAKER T. J. & J. Smith Ltd. Price Complete set £27.

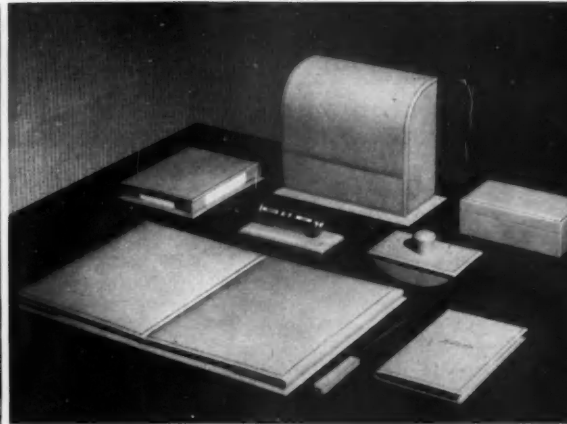
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8



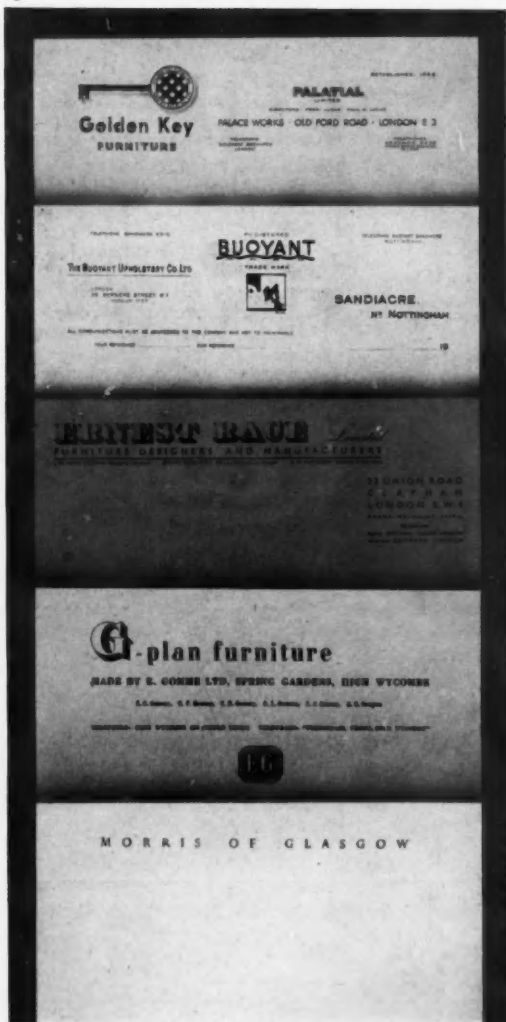
9



General letterheads Those responsible for stationery are apt to overlook the functional aspects of letterheadings: vital information (address and telephone number) should be clearly and tidily grouped, and the heading as a whole should look well when a letter has been typed on it.

Apart from the fact that the lettering of 'Palatial' is unattractive the arbitrary sizes of the types used on this heading make it hard to recognise the name of the firm. The same criticism could be levelled at the Buoyant heading; moreover, it is not clear which address should be replied to. Ernest Race has obviously given thought to its paper, but the 'Thorne Shaded' used for the firm's name looks a little choked in this large size and, again, the typography of the address is a little arbitrary.

The Gomme heading is attractive but functionally poor, since the typematter takes up nearly half the sheet. Morris has reduced simplicity to starkness; and, in these busy days, one feels the address at least should appear at the top instead of at the bottom of the page.



Re-styled letterheads These re-styled letterheads effectively demonstrate that many firms are aware of the need for well designed printing. Meredew and Gordon Russell are interesting examples of a modern re-interpretation of a traditional approach. The classical simplicity of Meredew's use of 'Perpetua' is flawless; the Gordon Russell heading, though a marked improvement, is less successful. The types are still too large, and it is a pity the firm has dropped the interesting symbol used earlier. Both Hille and Horatio Myer have chosen a thoroughly modern idiom, but though the colours (grey and yellow) of the latter are attractive the heading takes up too much space, and the typematter on the left is rather clumsily arranged. At the final attempt Hille has successfully achieved simplicity and clarity.

An industry in print

FURNITURE

ANTHONY ADAMS

DESPITE THE FEW large companies organised for mass production, the furniture industry in this country consists mainly of medium sized firms well equipped with machinery, but organised more on craft lines than in accordance with industrial methods; and has a surprising number of small units that are, in effect, hand craft businesses. Discussing the 'Review of the Furniture Industry', published by the British Productivity Council, the 'Board of Trade Journal', nevertheless, described the industry as changing over from a craft to a factory basis. Although there is a heavy concentration in London and High Wycombe the production of furniture is scattered throughout the country, with a considerable number of factories in the main provincial centres and larger county towns.

Because relatively little capital is required to start manufacture, an outstanding characteristic of the industry is the large number of firms engaged. Partly due to very keen competition, especially before the war, there has been a constant influx of new, small businesses, and a disappearance of others.

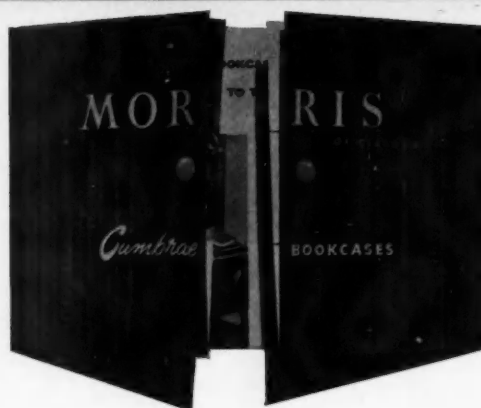
Against such a background of changing conditions and independent units, one would expect to find a spirit of experimentation and an awareness of the need for good publicity. Most of the accompanying illustrations support this hypothesis.

Examination of the printed matter used or put out by a selection of furniture manufacturers reveals that, broadly speaking, those firms that have concentrated on modern design in their products have realised the advantage of according the same treatment to their print. This applies particularly to publicity material, which is functional in arrangement, dynamic in layout, and free of unnecessary embellishment. Colours are clean and simple, and cover designs interesting. Many firms rely for their typography on sans serif types – a clear and logical choice but, it might be argued, rather at odds with the more decorative trends found in some of the best modern furniture design. On the other hand, the printed materials used by firms producing largely traditional and 'popular' furniture, is itself traditional in the bad sense of the word and comparable with low standards elsewhere.



Trade cards Among these trade cards Hille, Myer and Meredew have a close affinity with their respective letterheadings. Gordon Russell's is notable for its fine hand drawn lettering.

Brochure covers Brilliant and dynamic juxtaposition of product and application makes Morris's an exciting cover, while Meredew's achieves its purpose by good balance and sparse wording. 'G-plan' relies on simplicity, and reproductions of three home settings; 'Cumbrae bookcases', right, adds ingenuity to a similar approach – the folder opens at the centre like the doors of a cupboard. Myer's catalogue cover is adequate and informative, though the colours (yellow and red) in this combination do not go happily together.





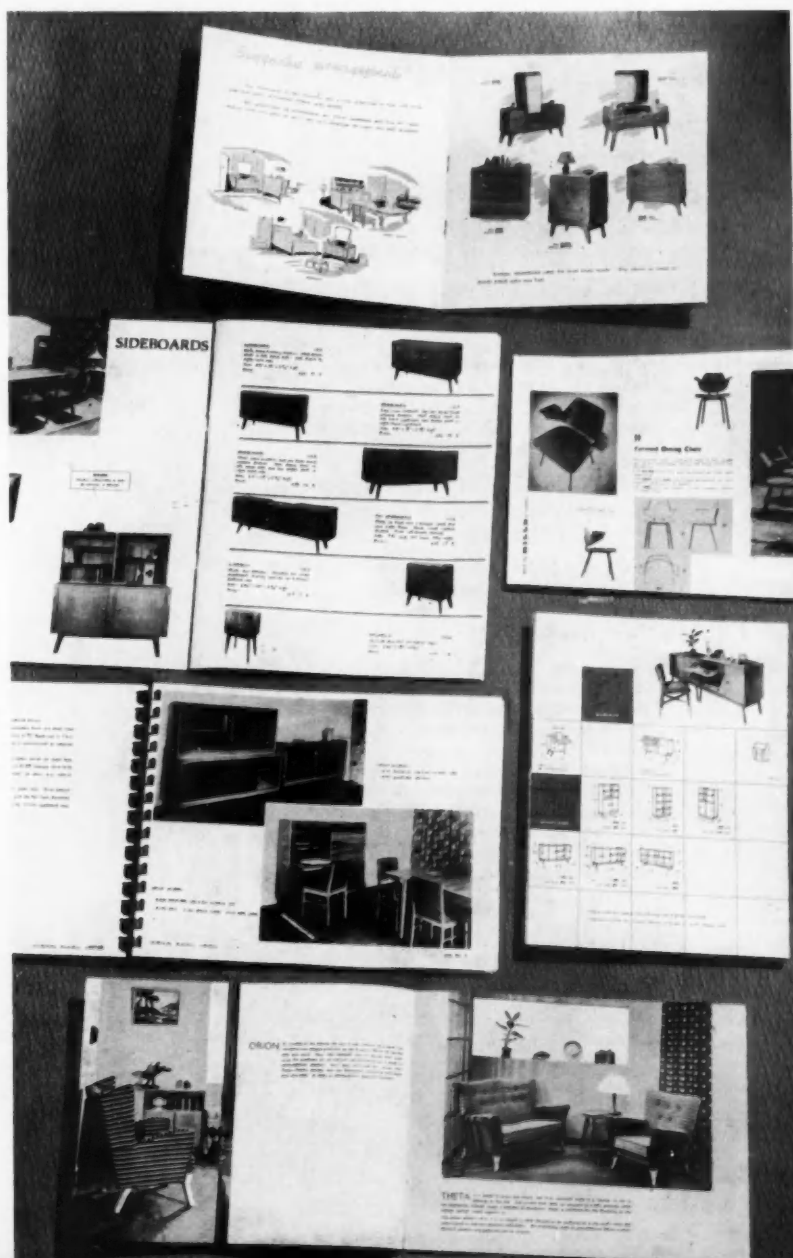
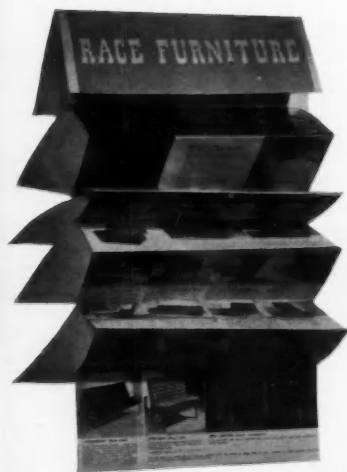
Brochure covers These are in stark contrast to those on page 32. In the 'Golden Key' example, the poorly mixed types and conflicting shapes distract the eye and so fail to make any impact; distorted letter-forms and the cosy drawing are unworthy of the inside pages of the Clark brochure. In spite of its simplicity, and the carefully angled lines leading the eye to the name, the 'Buoyant' cover is indefinitely dated.

Uniform

Morris	Hille
Russell	Meredew
Clark	

Inside brochures

It is of great interest to note that all these brochures rely on Gill Sans Serif types for the text matter. Conventional layout, hackneyed brush-lettering and purposeless patches of colour make the 'Uniform' brochure a telling foil to the others. These exploit a geometrical layout well suited to furniture, and are characterised by a logical arrangement of the reading matter that is truly functional. The Race catalogue, shown separately below, folds neatly into a format of $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches.





▲ **Leaflets** Hille uses the same attractive style and format for leaflets on different types of furniture, distinguishing each by a different colour. Gordon Russell achieves interest by the use of contrasting rules, and dignity by good typography. Good arrangement prevents the Myer folder from becoming overcrowded.

Showcards and labels Myer establishes a consistent style in its display material: the egg-shaped card (which is slipped over the headend of beds) is cunningly devised so as not to appear crooked when, in fact, it is. The 'Unitform' showcard reveals a much more up-to-date approach than the other material from this firm, but the commendable attempt is somewhat marred by the lettering of the name block and the distorted sans serif typeface.



Steel furniture for new markets

L. BRUCE ARCHER

THE RANGE OF TAPER TUBE furniture shown in the accompanying illustrations has just been released by Pel Ltd. It is the embodiment of a bold attempt by one of our leading manufacturers of tubular steel furniture to break away from conventions which have hedged in the industry for many years. Most of the models currently offered for sale by British manufacturers are copies of those which the Bauhaus introduced to a delighted world in the late 'twenties. The few really significant design changes which have occurred in the intervening years have been mainly concerned with close stacking. From these the new taper tube furniture is a welcome departure. The boldness which it represents, however, is not as much in the styling itself, which is restrained and modest, as in the principle of allowing aesthetic considerations to play a dominating role in the evolution of the design.

To most people who are outside the industry it may sound absurd to describe such a decision as bold when it is applied to products as dependent upon human susceptibilities as chairs and tables. Nevertheless, only a tiny minority of the models sold by the tubular steel industry have been evolved by men with any kind of design training at all. In many instances the production models are simply copied from a prototype constructed in accordance with the verbal instructions of a director, aided by the illustrations in a competitor's catalogue.

Since 1930, when manufacture commenced in Great Britain, the main influences on product design have come from production managers and works accountants, whose activities have reflected in turn the rigours of recurrent shortages of raw materials and an intensifying price competition.

Oversea manufacturers, notably the Americans and the Germans, have offered more exciting fare including such refinements as square-tube construction, with the result that the British industry has now practically no foothold in the export market.

The many very small manufacturers amongst the 45 or 50 in the industry have tended to trade through wholesalers in order to diminish the need for extensive advertising and sales organisations. Their bigger



**Steel furniture
for new markets**

Although the adoption of the stacking principle involves the provision of wide straddling legs, these taper tube chairs have been skilfully designed to keep them as unobtrusive as possible. The small diameter tapered legs terminate in little hooves and convey a visual impression of the lightness which the chairs do in fact possess. Both types of chair illustrated here may be stacked six to eight high, which is enough for the majority of users.

competitors have preferred to sell directly to the consumer. Nevertheless, some of the smaller firms, despite having to allow for middlemen's discounts in their selling prices, still manage to keep down to or even to undercut the level set by the major suppliers.

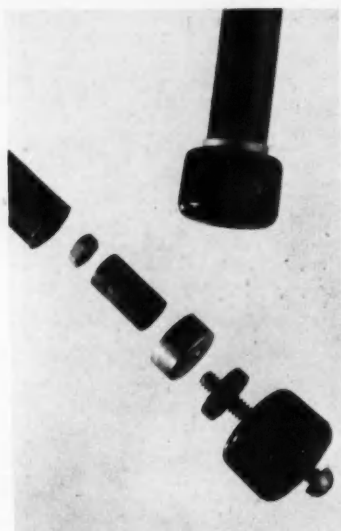
One outstanding feature of these conditions is the concentration of the bulk of the trade, which amounts to nearly £2 million annually, within a narrow range of consumer groups. Most of these products go to works canteens, recreation halls, hospitals and schools. The principal purchasers are, of course, government departments, the nationalised industries and social services. Their demands are very exacting in relation to materials and workmanship, and their inquiries are usually put out for competitive tender. Although most purchasing officers and members of management committees are eager to point out that in these enlightened days the better looking product would always be selected, "other things being equal", the truth is that contracts are more often awarded in recognition of a subtlety of discount than in appreciation of a subtlety of design. There has, therefore, been ample excuse for manufacturers to ignore aesthetics. It is sad to reflect that in consequence something like one-third of the people in these islands are having their standards of beauty and comfort conditioned by the unlovely and unyielding space-frames on which they sit for their mid-day meals and communal recreation.





Contrary to fact the three-legged chairs look heavier than their four-legged counterparts. The seats and backs are padded with hair-mat, wool and felt, and covered in 'Lionide', 'Vynide' or woven fabrics. The table, which is also an item in the new Pel range, is of plywood bonded with 'Formica' or wood veneers. Chair and table frames and legs are of seam welded steel tube stove enamelled in polychromatic colours.

The main selling points for tubular steel are its durability and its easy-to-clean characteristics. Unfortunately, the spartan virtues which have so commended themselves to institutional users have at the same time largely alienated other consumer groups. The tubular steel chair was a child of the same era which produced the cloche hat and the tubular jumper and for a time it enjoyed quite a vogue in the home. No doubt the directors of Pel Ltd were bearing in mind the possibility of regaining a position in the less price-sensitive household and catering markets and the possible effects of the recent introduction to this country by Dove-Inglis of American-style square-tube construction, when they decided to appoint an industrial designer to their staff. Harry Potter, who was appointed to this position, proposed that they should escape from the visual tyranny of unrelenting parallel tubes by adopting tapered legs and it must have taken quite an effort to renounce an axiom of the trade by accepting an increase in manufacturing costs for wholly aesthetic reasons. Indeed, on the advice of the



The hard plastic foot is attached by means of a soft rubber plug which shortens under the influence of a screw and nut and thus wedges inside the tubular leg. A metal cup and a rubber washer complete the resilient mounting.



The frame is of supremely simple welded construction. The seat is fastened at four points and completes the triangulated structure of the under-frame. The back also acts as a structural member by tying together at four points the rear leg extensions.

firm's advertising agents, T. Booth Waddicor and Partners, a consultant designer, Neville Conder, was called in to give a second opinion before the pill could be swallowed. The encouraging thing is that this step was taken not in a fervour of starry-eyed idealism but in recognition of the fact that good design is a selling point.

There is, perhaps, a superficial technical argument in favour of the tapered leg, but the mathematical value of the stress advantage of a tapered over a parallel cantilever would be a matter of decimal points, no greater than that which must be allowed for the many other variable factors which affect strength. Since the tapered tube is manufactured by reducing it from a parallel tube, it cannot be anything but an added expense. The taper also complicates the problem of fixing the foot to the leg. Pel has solved this very neatly by using a rubber plug inserted into the tube end and expanded against the side walls by means of a screw and nut. The rubber plug also serves to suppress the transmission of floor-generated noise along the leg to the seat or back surfaces which sometimes amplify the noise by acting as sounding-boards. The hard glider foot is designed to reduce drag noise without impeding movement. It is interesting to note that the London County Council has developed a similar system of resiliently mounted gliders as the result of a series of experiments conducted under the direction of the furniture section of the architect's department.

Withstanding rough treatment

Cross bars and ties between the legs have been eliminated in the new taper furniture. This increases the vulnerability of the furniture to buckling when dropped or rocked on two legs. On the other hand it unquestionably reduces the incidence of the impacts which are likely to occur, for example, when a number of people are taking their places at table. The horizontal floor member to be seen in many chair designs is the principal target for kicks and knocks and canteen managements have a passion for arranging tables in long continuous rows so that access is restricted. When the furniture is of the stacking type the projecting legs become almost impossible to avoid. This nuisance of clashing causes the greatest distress in works canteens and school assembly halls. The resulting rapid but entirely superficial dilapidation is an additional worry in schools. Experiments have been conducted with plastic coated tubes and with rubber buffers. Few purchasing officers, however, have found themselves able to authorise the admittedly considerable extra cost.

The unrelenting parallelism and incisive highlights on steel tubes give them a basically unsympathetic appearance which invites abuse when they are installed in factories and institutions and repels prospective household purchasers when the furniture is seen in the shops. Taper tube furniture goes a long way towards softening the impression, firstly because tapered legs echo more traditional designs and secondly because the polychromatic enamels diffuse the highlights. Experiments have been conducted with completely matt finishes and if these can be perfected there is no reason why taper tube furniture should not be able to take its place on equal terms on the domestic market. Meanwhile, Pel should not find it difficult to capture a worthwhile intermediate trade in the furnishing of executives' canteens, hotels, bars and common rooms.

Overseas Review

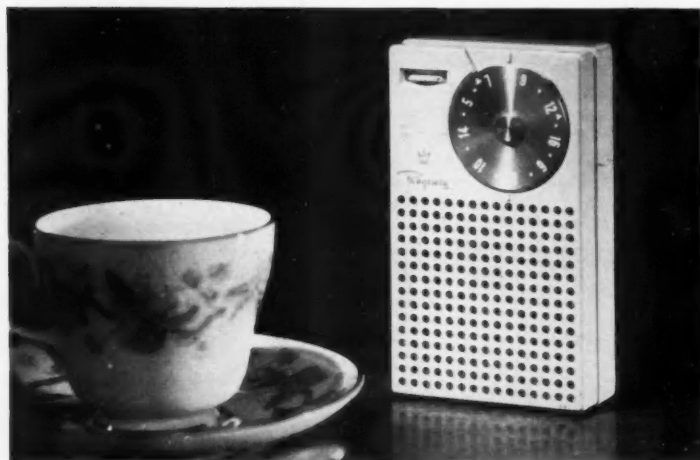
International miscellany

THE RACE TO CAPTURE world markets at a time when competition among manufacturing nations is becoming steadily more keen, throws increasing emphasis on the need for British producers to excel in both design and quality. Many British firms have built their reputations abroad on good quality and craftsmanship, and this must remain a distinguishing element in British goods. But even in young and remote corners of the world that have for long been content to accept a product merely because it works, or because its traditional style suggests an antique heritage, there is evidence of a growing awareness of design. This is not just an awareness of a style but of design itself – the

realisation that the form and colour of a product have to be consciously created to suit modern requirements if the finished result is to satisfy. Through the medium of magazines, exhibitions, television and the radio, 'design' is becoming a household word and the seeds of a new demand are taking root.

The question of how best this demand can be satisfied has caused fresh argument and discussion. Should we find out what is needed in a particular market and design a product to suit exactly these requirements – as a German pottery firm has done for the USA? Or should we rely on designs which are characteristically British and hope they will sell because

they are characteristically British – as the Swedes, for example, have relied on the particular character of their pottery and glass? There is clearly no universal answer which is valid for all industries. Each firm will find its own solution, which will depend on widely differing sets of conditions. But whatever approach is adopted it is important to be familiar with the work of other countries, who may be competitors or buyers, and it is sound policy to aim at those design standards which should tip the balance in favour of British goods. With this in mind we have collected a number of stimulating designs from a variety of countries and industries and some examples are reproduced on the following pages.



USA

Pocket radio

Painter, Teague and Petertil designed the case for this miniature transistor

radio receiver which is small enough to be carried in the pocket. Using dummies of the internal components, a series of designs was produced. Subsequently, however, changes in the size of certain of these components were necessary and a new design was submitted to the maker. When this was approved, several models were made, one of which had a transparent case to show the extreme compactness of the internal layout.

The radio has a black, white, grey or



red plastic case with a gold cloth under the perforated grille and a brushed brass selector dial. Styling devices which mark the majority of radio receivers have been omitted and the design relies for its smartness on good proportion, the contrast of materials and attention to detail. Earphones and a leather carrying case are accessories which are also available. This radio, which is claimed to be the first of its kind, is made by the Regency Division of IDEA Inc.

USA

Competition winner

This graceful chair, designed by Paul McCobb for H. Sacks & Sons, received one of the six 'Design in Hardwoods' awards for 1955 given by the American hardwoods industry in the second of its annual competitions. The competitions are sponsored by the Hardwood Exhibit Inc, a non profit making organisation set up by the industry to maintain a permanent exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago. The object is to encourage designers to make the best use of the natural properties of individual woods, one of the main points on which the entries are judged.



Adaptable light fitting

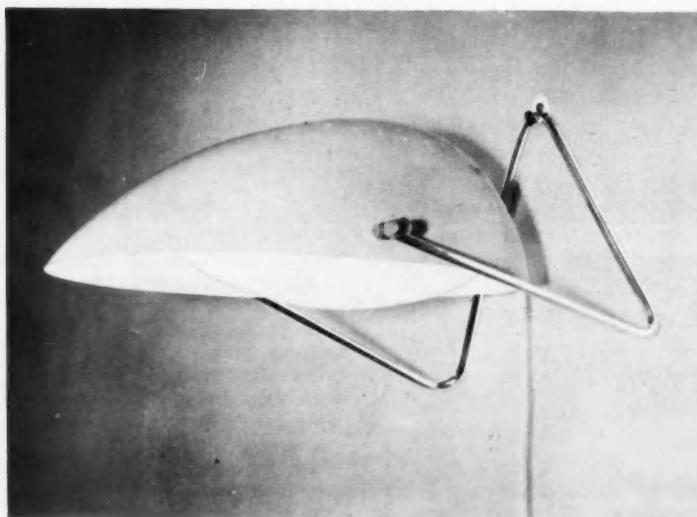
Few lighting fittings which are designed to serve more than one purpose are entirely successful. This example, however, which can be used as a wall or table lamp, appears to have overcome most of the usual difficulties. It consists of a metal reflector, finished in moss green, ebony or white, hinged on a polished brass mount. A plastic diffuser covers the bulb and serves to reduce the eye straining glare which is a common fault in many light fittings using metal reflectors. The fitting is made by Lightolier Inc, and received a 'Good Design' award from the Museum of Modern Art.



Manufacturers' club

This illustration shows part of the new Merchants' and Manufacturers' Club at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. This huge club, which includes a dining area capable of seating 1,750 people, was designed by the American architect Victor Gruen. It is perhaps significant that in this building which houses many products of a conventional nature, the club

selected a designer whose ideas express the most advanced trends in interior design in the USA. In spite of the expansive open plan a feeling of intimacy has been achieved by subtle indications of spatial division. The suspended beams, change of floor material, a screen of plants or a group of lighting fittings are used to define the areas or to lead the eye to a focal point. The cocktail lounge, shown here, has moulded glass fibre chairs designed by Charles Eames.



Motor coach

Designed over six years ago this coach still represents a high point of achievement in an industry whose products, particularly in Great Britain, have been marked by a bogus luxury expressed in terms of distorted body shapes and an excess of applied ornament. In this instance passenger appeal has been achieved in a more direct manner – by working from the inside (what the passenger needs) to the outside (what shape can most suitably express those needs). The raised rear passenger cabin is by no means unique. But the treatment is given dramatic effect by the simple, strong horizontals, the integration and subtle handling of shapes, and the detail design of such elements as the windows or side mirrors. The coach is built by the Truck and Coach Division of General Motors Corp. The design is by Raymond Loewy Associates.



Norway

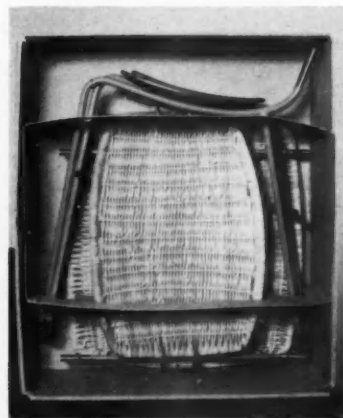
Designs for export

Norway is the youngest of the Scandinavian countries, but these pictures show one way in which she is making a determined effort to break in on the export market. The chairs made by Hiorth and Østlyngen AS are being

sent to the USA and Canada. To reduce freight charges so that they can be sold there at an economical price, they are demountable, are packed in a special carton, and are designed to be assembled at their destination with unskilled labour. Four variations of the chair are made: two have tubular metal frames in four standard colours with alternative cane or padded seats and backs; two have wooden frames on which the same alternative seats and backs can be fitted. In the metal framed chairs no tools are required for assembly, but the chairs with wooden frames are assembled with eight screws.

The padded seats are made in six different colours and have a rubber strip which grips on to the chair framework. They are held in stock by the retailers and can be quickly fitted or changed round to suit the customer's choice.

British exports of modern furniture to the North American continent are negligible and this suggests one way of doing it. Another and perhaps more appropriate method is to concentrate on pieces of outstanding design and of exceptional quality and finish to supplement, if not to replace, the existing market for reproduction furniture.



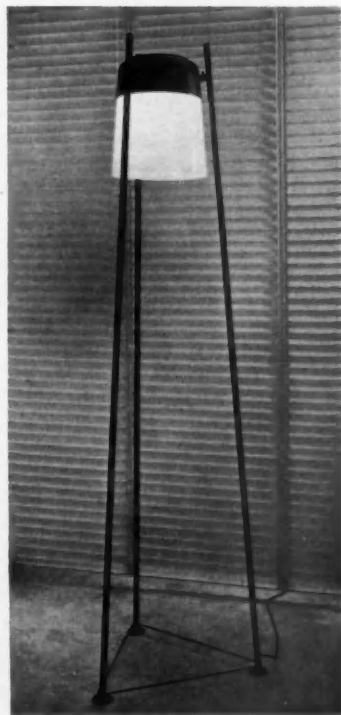
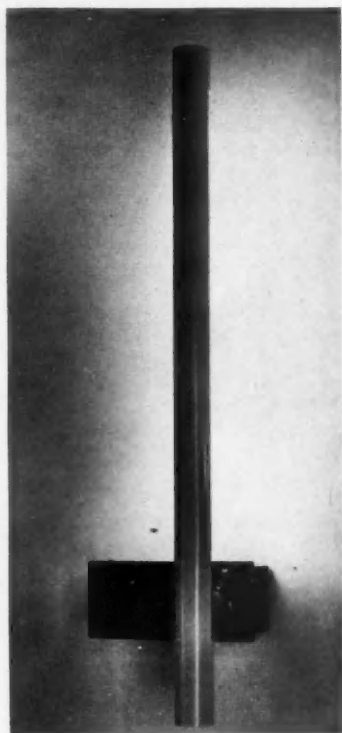
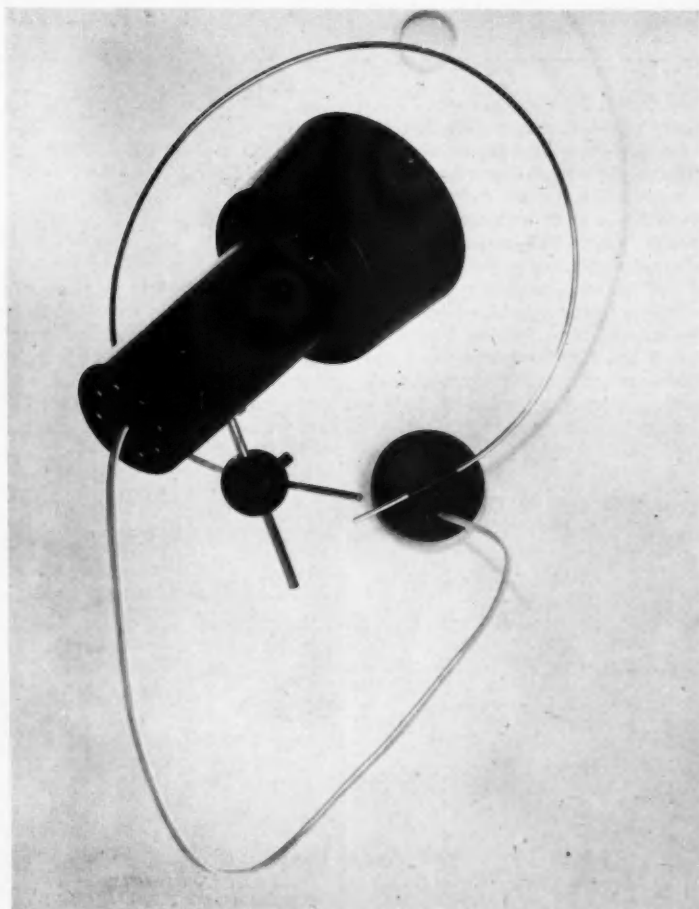
Italy

Lights from metal structures

DESIGN correspondent Letizia Ponti

Of all Italian designers one of the greatest exponents of the belief in simple, honest expressions of materials and structure in design is Gino Sarfatti of Arteluce Soc. In the examples shown here no concessions are made to an existing style or to any preconceived idea of what a light fitting should look like. The problem in each case has been stated in its simplest terms and a structure evolved which seems the most

direct solution. Thus the two main components of the fluorescent fitting, right, – the tube and the starter gear – have been accepted as separate elements in the design, no attempt having been made to combine them within a single shape. A metal cylinder covers the tube and is cut away on one side to allow light to be reflected from the wall. The result, as in all Sarfatti's designs, seems to amount to basic engineering, but the meticulous finish, the original and stimulating proportions, and the use of colour and contrasting materials, reveal the designer's outstanding aesthetic sensibilities. His approach to design is in direct contrast to the work of another well known industrial designer, Professor Wilhelm Wagenfeld, whose latest designs for light fittings are shown opposite. Sarfatti's fittings can be easily dismantled and have specially designed packs for ease of transport.



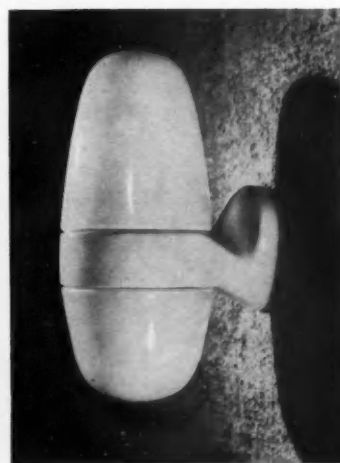
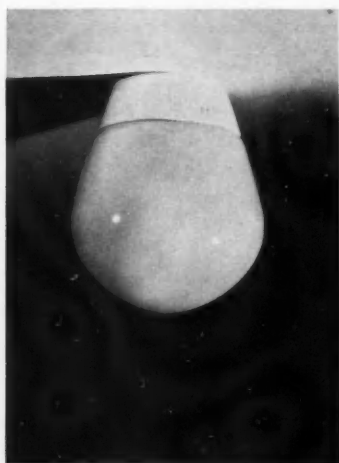
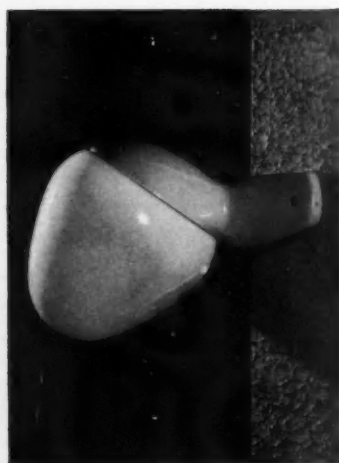
Germany

Lights in porcelain and glass

The German industrial designer, Professor Wilhelm Wagenfeld (DESIGN March 1955 pages 44-50) has recently set up a new studio and workshop where, with the help of students and assistants, he has started work on the design of several widely differing industrial products. Now some of the first of these designs, a range of water-proof lighting fittings for use in kitchens, bathrooms and on the exterior of houses, has been completed, some examples of which are illustrated here.

Wall lighting fittings are often conceived as two distinct elements - the bracket and the shade - which, like a cart and a horse, form an association but not a homogeneous unit. Each of these new fittings, however, has been designed as a single integrated form, the effect of unity being enhanced by the use of white porcelain for the brackets and opal glass for the shades, two materials of a similar texture. An intense search for more subtle refinements of three-dimensional form has been one of the chief characteristics of Wagenfeld's work and is particularly apparent in these latest designs where the shapes flow smoothly but are never weak.

The fittings are manufactured by Lindners of Bamberg, with glass shades by Peill and Putzler.



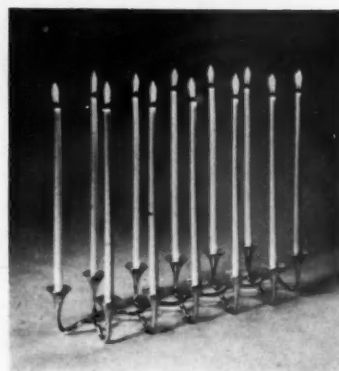
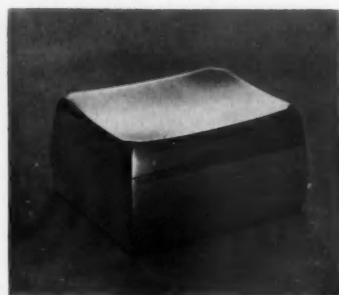
Denmark

Classical silver

With shapes of a rare classical dignity and repose, names like Georg Jensen, Just Anderson, A. Michelsen and many smaller silversmiths have established Denmark as a world leader in the design of modern silverware. The designs shown here by a young Danish sculptor, Jens Andreassen, carry on this tradition. They are all hand made in sterling silver by the firm of A. Dragseed A/S from plaster models made by the designer. The coffee pot, in which Andreassen worked in association with Soren Sass, was awarded first prize in a recent competition organised by the Danish Gold and Silversmith's Association. The fact that Andreassen is primarily a sculptor is significant. How many



sculptors in this country would be willing, or have the opportunity, to study the technical requirements necessary in the design of three-dimensional products for industry? It would seem to be a practical and stimulating way of making use of their talents and at the same time of bringing refinement and pleasure into countless homes.



Australia

Towards maturity

During the last few years Australia has been experiencing a spectacular growth of interest in modern design for domestic furnishing. The manufacturer of the pieces shown here, The Fler Co & Staff Pty Ltd, has reported that until 1952, when a minor but sharp trade recession hit the Australian market, modern furniture designs were stubbornly refused by the majority of retailers. Since then, however, more and more stores are displaying modern designs, "and as

if by magic a latent demand for such good designs has sprung up". The armchair and dining room pieces show that Australian designers are still feeling their way towards a native idiom, and in doing so have quite naturally drawn on the experience of designers in Europe and the USA. The designs show a graceful development from earlier, more ponderous examples and suggest that modern Australian design is moving towards a more mature self confidence.



NEWS

REPORTS & COURSES

'Design appearance lighting'

'Design appearance lighting' is the somewhat ambiguous name so far given to what is a new method of planning to achieve a desired lighting effect. The method was described by J. M. Waldram, lighting engineer, in a paper he gave at the last of the 1955 series of conferences for architects organised by the Electric Lamp Manufacturers' Association (ELMA) Lighting Service Bureau. He said that it was the custom, in planning interior lighting, to start with the lighting equipment and then to work out its effect. If the answer was wrong, the architect and engineer started again.

With the new method, "we start with a statement of what we want to achieve, and then work backwards to find what light we must release, and where it must be released from to obtain these effects", said Mr Waldram. He went on to explain how the architect can now specify the lighting he wants by reference to a scale of 'apparent brightness' which has been worked out, and which the lighting engineer can interpret. This scale takes into account the adaptation of the eye to the light presented to it, which is different from the response of a photometer. Together with other factors, such as the luminance of any point and its reflection factor, the illuminating engineer can design a fitting "engineering the lighting with a definite aim in view".

Mr Waldram described the lighting of a church by this method, where a trial

installation proved the actual result "to be close to the result we set out to get, in both light and shade and modelling. The important thing, however, is not the result we got, but that we got the result intended, by calculation, and first time".

Bible typography

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the 42-line Gutenberg Bible, leading typographers and printers in a number of countries are participating in a "mutual international project involving the typographical treatment of the Bible as exemplified by the beginning of the old Testament (Genesis)". The committee of seven, including Sir Francis Meynell, representing Great Britain, has invited 40 printers to offer designs, each consisting of an eight-page folder. The British participants are Eyre & Spottiswoode, Alan Dodson, Hans Schmoller and Berthold Wolpe. The designs will probably be exhibited internationally, and the complete set will be on sale, as the aim is to make available "an interesting collection of contemporary book designs which may be used for inspiration among students of typography, publishers, printers, and editors, and also, without any charge, as model solutions for any Bible printed anywhere".

Art in education

In his inaugural address of the current session, R. W. Holland, chairman of the council of the Royal Society of Arts, referred to the work of the RSA committee on art education. It had affirmed its belief that the general place of art and design in education was to cultivate a sense of appreciation. After discussing the teaching of art in all types of schools, Dr Holland said of art schools: "Wherever a school is the handmaiden of industry the widest facilities for co-operation with industry should be provided, and the school should be as well equipped as our best technical institutions. Art in relation to design must be allowed equal place with other technical courses."

Beer bottle labels

These labels have been included among a selection of 36 to illustrate an article by Clifford S. Smith on 'The Design of Beer Bottle Labels'. The article is published in 'A Monthly Bulletin', a magazine "representing the determination inside and outside the brewing industry to improve public houses and

to maintain an adequate licensing law". The history of bottle labels is outlined and some recent developments are discussed. All 36 labels are reproduced in colour and were chosen from about 2,000 which are issued by the brewing industry. The designers of the examples shown here are: left, THM Partners, centre Milner Gray, and right Ronald Ingle, both of Design Research Unit.



SIA award and oration

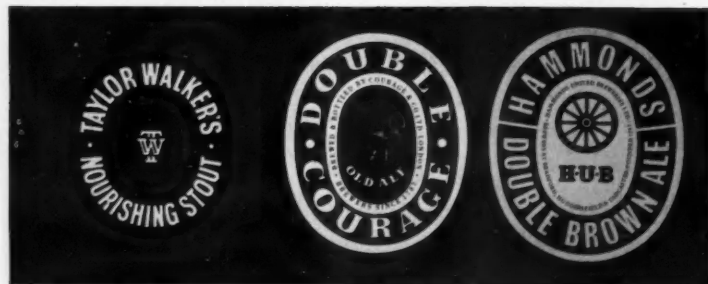
Milner Gray, past president and founder member of the Society of Industrial Artists, is the first recipient of the Society's Annual Award. The award, a medal designed by Professor R. Y. Goodden and made by Leslie Durbin, consists of a bronze disc showing the head of Minerva, the Society's symbol. The recipient's name and the occasion of the presentation are engraved on the reverse. A report on the first oration of the Society given by Dr J. Bronowski on the occasion of the presentation of the award is printed below.

Introducing Dr Bronowski, the secretary, Edward Barr, said that the occasion marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Society.

Dr Bronowski, speaking on 'The shape of things', pointed out that his approach to aesthetics was not contemplative but active. Art and science, he said, constitute a normal activity of life. The act of 'doing it' makes an object beautiful to the artist: the recollection of how it was done makes it beautiful to us. Dr Bronowski stressed that the scientist's introduction of new materials and new techniques would increase the freedom of those artists who made the effort to master the inventions. Limitations of new materials are not presented to the artist in an obvious manner by the scientist; it is for the artist to discover them for himself. It followed that the artist would find his scope limited only if he had to be told on each occasion what was structurally or mechanically possible.

Dr Bronowski thought that design tends to be of a high standard in the new products of pioneer industries. In this way our imagination is caught by the characteristic shaping of such things as cars, aircraft and calculating machines. The technique of streamlining which is associated with one of these has become a meaningful idea in the public's mind, and its presence in static objects is, therefore, a relevant extension of the idea. Dr Bronowski held out great hopes for our age; on the basis of great ages in the past, he thought that we could expect to see both science and art today flourishing and flowering together. Taste in any age is a unity. To avoid another occurrence of "Victorian monumental boredom we must avoid making mud huts in modern materials".

continued on page 47



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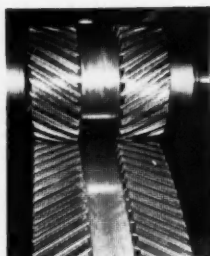


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Two unusual chairs

Although these two chairs have no connection, they are shown together here because each in its way is a stimulating and unusual design. The chair, left, is one of the first to be produced in this country made of glass fibre reinforced plastic. Its appearance inevitably recalls the well known glass fibre chair designed by Charles Eames (DESIGN June 1954 pages 30-32) yet its shape has a subtlety of modelling and a grace which is a valid and original contribution to design in this medium. The chair is made by the 'wet lay up' process in a small workshop started by a young designer, Aidron

Duckworth, who won first prize while still a student at the Royal College of Art in the 1954 Latex Foam Furniture Design Competition organised by the British Rubber Development Board. The shell has a semi-matt cellulose finish and in later versions the legs are attached with a simple glass fibre clip permitting quick and easy assembly. Two further designs for glass fibre chairs are being developed by the designer.

The second chair, right, designed by Ernest Race of Ernest Race Ltd for spastic children. No extravagant claims have been made by the manufacturer for this design, and the result has been achieved without recourse to extensive medical research. It arose simply

from the personal contact of the designer with one of these unfortunate children, and the belief that improvements could be made on the rather clumsy chairs that were already in use. In these existing types the wheels were at the rear and the chair had to be tilted backwards to a considerable degree before it could be moved. The new version has solid rubber wheels arranged so that the chair is tilted forward just sufficiently to allow the rear legs to clear the ground. A swivel wheel in front prevents the chair from tipping forward and also allows it to be steered. The result is a simple, practical and pleasant looking design that has been welcomed by the National Spastics Society, to whom enquires should be made.

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Dr Bronowski drew an analogy between pure mathematics and decoration. Both, he said, had to rely on firm foundations, in the one case the humble methods of everyday life; in the other, industrial design. As a pure mathematician, he confessed that his interests were more likely to be satisfied with decoration than with functional design, with poetry rather than with prose. As a corollary he explained that if abstract shapes were to mean much to us, they must be in themselves meaningful. A delta-wing aircraft was abstract; a delta wing was also highly functional. Industrial design, he pointed out, was all around us; it forms the taste of the public, in fact it echoes the idea of structure which is in the public mind.

Aesthetics for engineers

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co Ltd has held a second aesthetics course for engineering designers on its staff, following the first successful course a year ago, as part of a

planned programme of appearance design training. The aesthetics course is given by the Bauhaus method to groups of about a dozen design engineers and draughtsmen, and students carry out experiments in the formal arrangement of simple materials such as cardboard, wood blocks and plaster. Engineering design students with no previous aesthetic experience have so successfully assimilated this kind of instruction by J. Christopher Jones, of Metropolitan-Vickers Appearance Design Office, that a 'Design Projects course' is to be held this year for the best students from last year's courses. Mr Jones will lecture on the analysis of paintings, natural objects and engineering designs, and Jack Howe, architect and designer and design consultant to the company, will guide students in the redesigning of an engineering product.

Metropolitan-Vickers also arranges general lectures from time to time on theoretical aspects of appearance design, on recent developments in the design of the company's own equipment, and on such subjects as ergonomics.

EXHIBITIONS

Oversea trade fairs

A full statement of Government practice and policy regarding participation in overseas trade fairs is contained in a reprint of two articles from the 'Board of Trade Journal', originally published on October 8 and 15, 1955. These articles deal in detail with the kind of trade fair in which the Government is prepared to help British manufacturers, and explain why and when it is not. Copies of the reprint can be obtained free of charge from the CoID, 28 Haymarket, London SW1.

British design in USA

An exhibition of 'Designs from Britain' has been arranged by Professor Rudy Jegart for showing at the University Gallery of the Florida State University from January 6-27. Work from the following designers is represented: Misha Black, Lucienne Day,

continued on page 49

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The Crusader and the ballotini beads

There is no romantic legend here. The Crusader happens to be a highly-efficient electric water heater and the ballotini beads are minute glass spheres scattered in thousands on road signs to give whole area reflection. But the two are related: the water heater and the reflective road signs are made by companies in the seven Divisions of Tube Investments.

So many things that make life easier, and sometimes save it, stem from the symbol TI, and its manufacturing companies—from oxygen bottles (which went to the top of Everest and Kanchenjunga) to hypodermic needle tubing, bicycles to rolled steel sections, flame-proof lighting to aluminium sheet, and mechanical handling plant to rolling mills.

The TI General Division, for instance, makes prefabricated structures for buildings, buses and railcars; aeroplane parts; plastic tubes; cold rolled metal sections; metal furniture; paints and industrial finishes; traffic signs, transport seating and shop fittings. That is one TI Division among the seven which serve the world: Steel Tube Division, Engineering Division, Electrical Division, Aluminium Division, Steel Division, Cycle Division, General Division.



Tube Investments Limited

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continued from page 47

Robin Day, Abram Games, Milner Gray, W. M. de Majo, Ernest Race, Hans Schlegel.

The exhibition has been assembled on the initiative of Mr de Majo and privately sponsored by those concerned. Later it will be seen at the Institute of Design, Chicago, The Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, and will go on tour on the West Coast.

USA crafts museum

The establishment of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts to be opened in New York City in April 1956, is announced by the American Craftsmen's Educational Council. It is the first museum in the United States devoted entirely to crafts. Its programme will consist of national and international exhibitions, lectures, special publications, advisory services and visual aids and its aims are to "set the highest possible standards for craftsmen and encourage the public to appreciate the creative work of designer-craftsmen". Herwin Schaefer is director, Dominique Mailliard curator, and Charles Burwell business administrator.

"It is the aim of the new Museum of Contemporary Crafts to further the creative efforts of individual craftsmen and to

give them their proper dignity and place in the world of arts", said Mr Schaefer. "From our point of view there is no virtue or value in the hand process itself or by itself. It is the creative element in the end result which is decisive and it is that which will concern the museum."

Photography in industry

"Far too many of our exporters still pay insufficient attention to the visual appeal", said Derek Walker-Smith, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, at the opening of a 'Photography in Industry' Exhibition held recently at Caxton Hall, London. He went on: "Too many catalogues are illustrated by murky illustrations of an earlier day, or not illustrated at all. Too many advertisements by British firms in foreign papers carry the pictures which... are sadly inappropriate abroad. Too many photographs in trade and export papers, having useful overseas circulations, are flat and static pictures lifted straight from trade catalogues. . . . I would like to think that manufacturers may come to learn that at very little more trouble and expense they can help to present abroad a more vivid picture of Britain - virile, inventive and right up-to-date."

English chintz exhibition

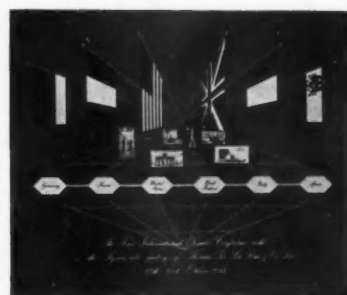
An exhibition of printed furnishing fabrics entitled 'English Chintz: Two Centuries of Changing Taste' is on view at the Cotton Board Colour, Design and Style Centre until February 4. The exhibition is the result of research undertaken by the Department of Circulation at the Victoria and Albert Museum under the direction of Peter Floud. A great many hitherto unknown designs have been brought to light and the exhibition offers original and stimulating information for designers and manufacturers.

One of the discoveries in the 'English Chintz' exhibition. The illustration shows a paper impression of a copperplate engraving for a printed fabric, in the pattern book from the Bromley Hall print works, Middlesex, the

The exhibition strikingly demonstrates how the leading English designers of each decade since 1800, with the possible exception of a short period around 1860, introduced a succession of new and original designs, so that the work of each ten or fifteen year period looks radically different from what has gone before. The exhibition shows how misleading it is to speak of a single 'traditional' English chintz style. Each period of the past had its own contemporary style, characteristic of the most advanced taste of the time.

It is to be hoped that arrangements will be made for the exhibition to be seen in London and other centres of industry.

leading eighteenth century producers of printed fabrics. The date of the pattern is about 1775, and very forcibly recalls the treatment of flowers and grasses that is characteristic of some of the best modern British textiles.



Commemorative mural

The first International Formica Convention was recently concluded by the unveiling of this mural at the Tynemouth factory of Thomas De La Rue & Co Ltd. Eighteen commercial and technical delegates from six countries discussed with De La Rue representatives new developments in the production and marketing of plastics laminates. The 'Formica' mural was designed by W. M. Dixon, head of the firm's design staff at Tynemouth.

BIF

Mr R. A. Butler, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is to open the British Industries Fair at Olympia on April 23. This BIF will be the second held in London in 1956. The first, at Earls Court, will be opened by Lady Eden, on February 22. The British Toy Fair, which formerly was held at Brighton, will be part of the first BIF - the first trade fair to be brought under the BIF 'umbrella'. It is being run jointly by the BIF and the British Toy Manufacturers' Association.

COMPETITIONS

American store award

An aluminium bed tray by The Kaymet Co (DESIGN May 1953 page 22) is one of 52 products sold by Hess Brothers, Allerton, Pennsylvania, which has won an award in a novel (and it is claimed, unique) competition organised for the last five years by this American store. Independent judges formed the 'Versatility in design awards committee', and the products selected were exhibited at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York City. Kaymet's award states that it was placed first of gifts items.

Domestic fire settings

The Institute of Fuel announces a competition for the design of settings for free-standing domestic fires. Its purpose is to stimulate thought among architects, builders and industrial designers on the design possibilities of attractive settings for efficient free-standing appliances. The three sections of the competition involve designs for settings suitable for new low cost dwellings, for new houses where cost is not so important, and for converting existing settings to accommodate free-standing fires. It is intended that one prize of 200 guineas should

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'CARAFE' specially designed by JUNE LYON for new Terminal Buildings, London Airport

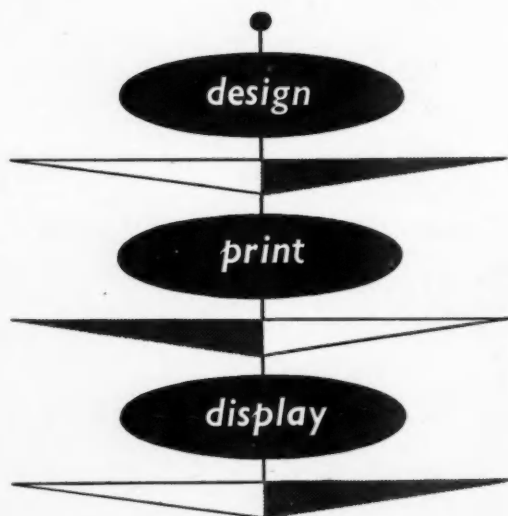


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continued from page 49

be awarded in each section. For details of the competition, approaches should be made to The Secretary, the Institute of Fuel, 18 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, London W1. Closing date for entries is March 31.

University mace

The Corporation of Kingston upon Hull is to present a mace to the University of Hull to celebrate the University's incorporation in 1954, and the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths is conducting a competition for a design of 'genuinely modern feeling' in silver, parcel gilt or gilt. For prizes and the winning designer's fee, a total of £100 is available, and the closing date for submitting designs is February 17.

MISCELLANEOUS

Automation and design

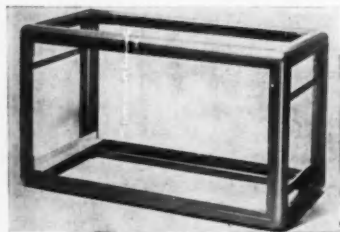
'The Present and the Future' produced by the General Electric Co Ltd discusses the influence of atomic power on electricity and the growth of automation in industry, amongst other topics. On automation, the publication comments: "It should be appreciated, however, that an attempt to duplicate the function of the human operator by automatic and electronic devices without changing the process or the design of the product may often prove wasteful. For automation to take over, the product may have to be redesigned and the processes changed or modified."

FDC move

The Furniture Development Council has moved its research and technical information departments to 2-4 Dalmeny Avenue, London N7.

Instrument cabinets

A 'make-it-yourself' instrument cabinet construction system, shown here, is being marketed by Alfred Imhof Ltd. Called the Imhof-Elliot system it consists of a light alloy framework which is locked together by a simple corner connector. The corner connector has three prongs which slide into the longitudinal members of the framework to produce a joint which is strong and extremely simple in appearance. The framework is designed to hold flush fitting panels to which various types of instruments are attached. Frame members can be supplied to any size within a standard length of 12 ft.



Redecorated church interior

The interior of the Church of Christ, Isle of Dogs, which has been in great disrepair since the war, has been redecorated recently, using simple inexpensive modern techniques. With only £100 in hand after structural repairs had been completed, the enterprising vicar, Father Peter Priest, consulted Alan Lindsay, a painter and designer. To keep within the allotted sum, Mr Lindsay painted the nave grey, with yellow window reveals, and concentrated upon enriching the chancel. He blocked out three lancet windows over the altar with photo-murals of his own design, in black line on a white background. The east wall around these effigies has been papered richly in a wall-paper specially designed by Mr Lindsay and printed by Cole & Son Ltd in dark red, with an intricate black line design. The same design is used for the side walls of the chancel, printed in red on white. The difficulty of bringing warmth and conviction into religious symbolism today is well known, but here a sense of richness has been achieved with the greatest economy of means.

R S A meetings

T. Kotas, engineer, and Robin Day, furniture designer, will give a paper on 'A new approach to furniture design' at 2.30 pm on Wednesday, January 11, at the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, London WC2.

F. H. K. Henrion will talk on 'The design on television settings', at 2.30 pm on February 1.

Christmas cards

DESIGN is proposing to review Christmas cards, and the editor invites you to send him - after Twelfth Night - any interesting personal or business cards you have received or made.



Hans G. Knoll

We referred briefly in our last issue to the tragic death of Hans G. Knoll, founder of Knoll Associates Inc, New York. We print below a personal tribute to him by George Nelson, the well known American designer.

My earliest recollections of Hans Knoll have little to do with the kind of thing that normally finds its way into obituaries. The first recollection goes back to the late 'thirties when I had a junior editorial job on an architectural magazine. Hans had recently arrived from Germany and was attempting to set up his business. As part of an effort to get recognition for his product, he came into my office carrying one of his chairs. Tall, blond and slim, he looked all of sixteen years of age. The second recollection has to do with a weekend at our house in the country when Hans and his wife arrived with a piece of furniture. This time we both carried it in.

Seen in retrospect, there are two things about these incidents that strike me: one, that his furniture was first-rate design; the other, that the intimate contact with his furniture Hans Knoll demonstrated so energetically was something he never lost in the years of success.

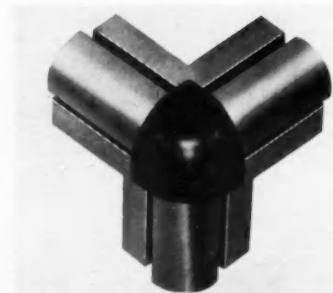
Hans Knoll was a businessman, not a designer. He was dedicated to the building of a successful commercial venture. Yet I suspect that there have been very few men in business who have so carefully guarded the design integrity of their products or who have maintained so consistently a high critical standard. If designers need a model, this man of business could very well provide it.

As a furniture producer, Knoll dealt with many designers: with Mies, Eero Saarinen, Hardoy, Jeanneret, Jens Risom and others. Although one hears much gossip in the furniture industry, I never heard of anything but good that came to designers who entered into relationships with him. The high standards established with this group were maintained in the interiors designed by the Planning Unit and the advertising prepared by Herbert Matter.

For many years Hans and I were friends and then, as so often happens in the big cities, our paths diverged. In the late 'forties when I was called in to design for the Herman Miller Furniture Co we found, much to our surprise, that we had become competitors. The competition was a good thing. It is always good to have to meet high standards.

It is appropriate, I suppose, to attempt to assess the influence a man has had, but

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If you have found this issue of DESIGN interesting why not see it regularly? DESIGN has authoritative news each month of new products from Britain and from overseas. It pays to read DESIGN. If you already see DESIGN please pass this on to a friend.



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continued from page 51

somehow now that Hans is gone, this does not interest me very much. The world has become very large and very complicated, and the effect of an individual on his fellow men and successors seems to get lost in the shuffle very quickly. With the constant intensification of competition for the centre of the stage and the vastly increased speed and scope of communications, it seems to be more and more difficult for any single person to hold public attention very long or to affect public standards very conspicuously. It seems to me far better to consider not what a man did to or for other people but what he did with himself. For a man to set high standards when the general tendency is to lower them, to take the hard way when success could have been arrived at much more easily, takes not only courage but vision, sensitivity and integrity. This was the job Hans Knoll worked at all through his life. And he did it very, very well.

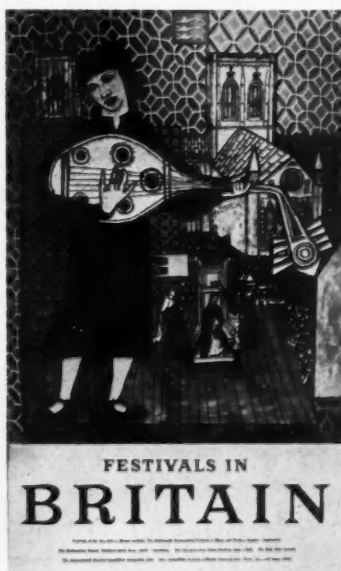
GEORGE NELSON

'Graphis Annual'

The Sylvan Press Ltd is the sole distributors in the United Kingdom of 'Graphis Annual 1955/56' (DESIGN November 1955 page 53). Its price is £3 10s.

Poster award

An international award for 'the most artistic travel poster of the year' has been won by the British Travel and Holidays Association's 'Festivals in Britain' poster, shown here, in competition with 150 entries. It was chosen by vote by delegates from over 40 countries to the general assembly of the International Union of Official Travel Organisations at New Delhi. The poster was also the first choice of a panel of experts, including an Indian art critic. It was designed by Kempster and Evans and printed by W. S. Cowell, Ipswich.



Design: Number 85

Letters

Perceptive industrialists

SIR: Members of our firm find your publication *DESIGN* both interesting and stimulating to their efforts as industrial designers. Our attention was particularly aroused by the editorial in your issue for August 1955. It is heartening to realise that industrialists (as well as editors) are more perceptive of the fact that the consumer of this period demands both a well engineered and a well designed product. We feel it is also important that the industrialist be made to realise that appearance design should begin with the inception of a new product rather than an attempt at redesign after a disappointed public has failed to respond to sales promotion as anticipated. Certainly design is a highly specialised field and it becomes increasingly apparent that the manu-

facturer should restrict this work to those trained and qualified for the purpose.

HENRY C. KECK
Henry Keck Associates
South Fair Oaks Avenue
Pasadena 2, California

With compliments

SIR: With reference to the letter from Mr Hobson in your issue for December 1955, in fairness to the students in the Department of Silversmithing and Jewellery of the Royal College of Art, I should like to make it clear that their work, as also my own responsibility, was confined to the metal components of the address presented to the Royal Society of Arts by the Society of Industrial Artists and that the work was completed and left this Department without any of us setting eyes on the printed address itself. It may also be of interest to the SIA to know that we have perpetuated nothing. The studs which fasten the frame of the address can quite well be taken apart.

R. Y. GOODDEN
School of Silversmithing & Jewellery
Royal College of Art
South Kensington, SW7

Books

Decorative Art, The Studio Year Book of Furnishing and Decoration 1955-1956, Volume 45, edited by Rathbone Holme and Kathleen Frost, The Studio Publications, 30s
L'Arredamento Moderno, Sesta Serie, by Roberto Aloï, Ulivo Hoepli, Alec Tiranti, £4 8s

The forty-fifth issue of 'Decorative Art' is a very handsome publication, and begins with a section of the greatest interest devoted to the custom-built small house: small houses carefully designed by thoughtful architects for particular people on particular sites, using the whole range of modern techniques and materials. Basil Spence - a pupil of Lutyens and himself already famous for the right, the clever, the daring rather than the conventional solution - introduces this section by discussing a small house in Canada which he likes and admires, built by the architect John Porter for himself and family on a woodland site in West Vancouver: while the subsequent 13 examples have been chosen from countries with widely differing conditions and people - New Mexico, New Zealand, Argentina, Holland, Great Britain. All these examples, with the possible exception of the Belgian, are stimulating in their various ways: and in particular are an admirable means of linking the home itself, be it house or flat, in town or country, with the illustrations of domestic wares which follow and make up the body of the book. There are 560 photographs, dealing with carpets, textiles, furniture, ceramics, glass, tableware and lighting, and representing the selected work of nearly 500 designers and manufacturers. 'Decorative Art' is not, of course, either comprehensive

or, so to say, authoritative, but represents (presumably) its editors' choice from 'the immense collection of specimens and photographs submitted for consideration over the past few years': again in editorial language, its function is "to review world events in the contemporary field of domestic furnishing and to provide a stimulus to the creation of a gracious setting for family life". This (with one or two reservations discussed below) it achieves extremely well, providing a useful and catholic cross-section of well designed household wares within the fields it covers.

The sixth volume of 'L'Arredamento Moderno' is a bigger volume altogether, largely because it covers several fields - kitchens, bathrooms, fireplaces, outdoor furniture and ornaments - which 'Decorative Art' does not. There are 738 photographs against the Studio volume's 560: on the other hand the number of designers and manufacturers contributing is slightly less, so that there must, presumably, be more examples per designer. It is gratifying to find that the Council of Industrial Design is indexed 14 times, though these illustrations also appear under the names of the artists or manufacturers concerned. The Italian coverage is so good that it is difficult to think of anything of first-rate quality produced today in Europe or in Asia, within the fields it covers, without finding it illustrated here. In both these volumes one is struck by the difference made by the occasional colour plates, and cannot wistfully help wishing there were more. They make the kind of difference in beauty and desirability that the wide screen makes to pictures of Arizona or Wyoming in the cinema. From seeing them one realises that many of the interiors which here look clean but frigid, practical but not particularly inviting, glow and sparkle in reality with sumptuous or subtle colour: that colour is an equal partner with form in many of these creations, and that to be robbed of it is putting almost too great a strain on the untrained imagination. Everything, therefore

continued on page 55



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should be read with reference to the coloured plates, and with the lesson of the admirable Italian dust-cover firmly borne in mind.

The editors do not make it clear to what extent it is their purpose to assist manufacturers (or designers), whose products are selected, with publicity of this kind. Where the Studio publication is concerned one must charitably assume the intention to be large if not dominant: otherwise some very awkward figures emerge, particularly in comparison with its Italian counterpart. It is natural perhaps to give one's own country some sort of preference, but a very marked preference might seem to belie the intention to review world events with real discrimination. Thus in 'L'Arredamento Moderno' 23.5 per cent of all the artists and manufacturers shown are Italian, 17 per cent American, 5 per cent German; with Great Britain, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Holland, contributing between 3 and 4 per cent each. Since Italy is indubitably the most interesting and progressive country in nearly all fields of design today, from motor cars to textiles, this proportion seems, *a priori*, about right and even to be a modest assessment on the part of its Italian sponsors. 'L'Arredamento Moderno' must be judged a first-rate piece of editing; comprehensive, sparkling, fair. The Studio book gives Great Britain 37 per cent of its total names, the U S A, Sweden and Denmark 12.5, 13 and 10 per cent respectively, France 7 per cent, Holland 4 per cent and Germany 2 per cent. Where is Italy? There is not one example nor, so far as can be discovered, any reason given for this omission. It would be comforting to think that design in this country was so good as to deserve more than a third of the contents of 'Decorative Art', but so serious an omission makes it impossible not to question its editors' intention.

WYNNDHAM GOODDEN

The Architecture of Japan, Arthur Drexler, *The Museum of Modern Art, New York*, \$6.50, Alec Tiranti, £2 10s

"To a Western observer Japan seems to have been populated entirely by gifted architects." This remark, quoted from page 255, sums up one's impression of a book of absorbing interest and, except for the last part (about a sixth of the whole) in which modern Japanese architecture is sketchily treated, one of very high quality.

This quality is the result of authenticity. The author has set himself to understand Japanese architecture in terms of Japanese values. He does not assemble selected details of folk building, as many have done before, and use them as pegs on which to hang his own architectural theories. He gives an account of Japanese architecture from the earliest times in terms of buildings held in greatest esteem by the Japanese themselves. This method is at once revealing. It taught me that to a Japanese the roof is the chief thing, a massive roof of delicately sculpted shape, sometimes ornamented, sustained on the most slender columns so that it appears to float above the ground. The Japanese habit of enclosing space below the roof with light movable screens is explained, and attention is drawn to the conscious subtleties of their interior and garden design. To follow the explanations and study the pictures would be a stimulating exercise for

any designer. Then, alas! the book ends with such a let-down as to make one almost doubt the authenticity of the rest of it.

The Museum of Modern Art had an exhibition house made in Japan in the style prevalent about 1600, and transported it to New York where it was re-erected in the Museum's yard. This is illustrated in the last 24 pages. To anyone who, like myself, was thrilled by the pictures of the real thing, every one of these was discordant. Would the Museum have had an English architect design a Tudor pavilion (also about 1600) to house an English exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York?

MARK HARTLAND THOMAS

New Horizons in Colour, Faber Birren, Reinhold Publishing Corporation, New York, \$10, Chapman & Hall, £4

After discussing various aspects of colour Faber Birren states: "My preferred interest is in the realm of human vision and psychology." He believes that "architecture and decoration are vital forces and colour which in the past has been more or less coddled for its aesthetic and pleasurable qualities should be better understood and applied". He goes on: "Surely it can be made far more of a dynamic and essential force in modern life." There are chapters devoted to the problems of seeing and illumination: the principles of colour: the application of colour to modern buildings including private houses, schools, hospitals, hotels and restaurants as well as industrial plants and office buildings.

I met Faber Birren a few years ago while on a lecture tour in America and more recently at an international congress in Rome. We both have strong views on certain matters relating to colour, one important one being the restriction of paint ranges. Birren has recently completed two important assignments, one for the U S Navy and the other for the Coast Guard. The former includes shipyards, ordnance plants, air stations, barracks, administrative buildings, personnel quarters, hospitals and recreational areas as well as all transportation equipment, shore facilities, cranes and derricks, etc. The entire navy assignment necessitated the use of only 26 colour standards including those set aside for the purposes of a safety code.

Regarding industry, Mr Birren says: "In average large industries about 16 colours are required for all purposes." He believes that these small ranges of colours are an important economic factor and facilitate maintenance. One chapter is devoted to the story of colour in architecture in which both Oriental and Occidental symbolism and mythology are considered, and the author concludes the chapter by saying: "Surely the modern architect must turn his back on a grey age. Colour belongs with architecture. . . . The designer must not have a mere feeling for colour but a real knowledge of it. . . . Through a sound application of principles unknown to other generations he may attain a supremacy that will make the best efforts of his predecessors fade into historic obscurity." This statement of course cannot apply to such men as Chevreul who wrote most profoundly 100 years ago on the principles and application of colour.

The book is well printed with generous margins, but while the photographs are

good, only six are in full colour. Black and white photographs, even if the colours are well described, cannot tell the story visually as can a good coloured illustration.

ROBERT F. WILSON

Preparation for Painting, Lynton Lamb, Oxford University Press, 18s

Mr Lamb's 'Preparation for Painting' is a worthy successor to C. R. Leslie's classic 'Handbook for Young Painters', published 100 years ago. Although lacking the advantages of Constable's friendship, Mr Lamb is a far better painter than Leslie, and also an extraordinarily good writer. He is a born teacher whose style is simplicity itself. He deals with the practical job of the painter, and distils the knowledge of a lifetime into a mere 150 pages which can be read as easily as a 'Whodunnit'. I came to the end much too soon. Throughout the text a series of brilliantly chosen quotations from great painters and writers gives the book the additional attraction of being almost a painter's anthology. This book should find its way into every art school library, and will give great pleasure to all practising artists. It is well illustrated, contains many diagrams, and is admirably produced.

CAREL WEIGHT

Correction

DESIGN November page 50: the design and typography of the 'Asbestolux' brochure was by Ian Bradbery. William Pack wrote the text.

DESIGN

The Index to DESIGN (DESIGN 1955, Volume 7) will be sent only to those readers who request it from the Circulation Manager. Copies of DESIGN for 1955 can be bound for 14s 6d. Copies should be sent direct to: Benham and Co Ltd, 12 Culver Street, Colchester, Essex.

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